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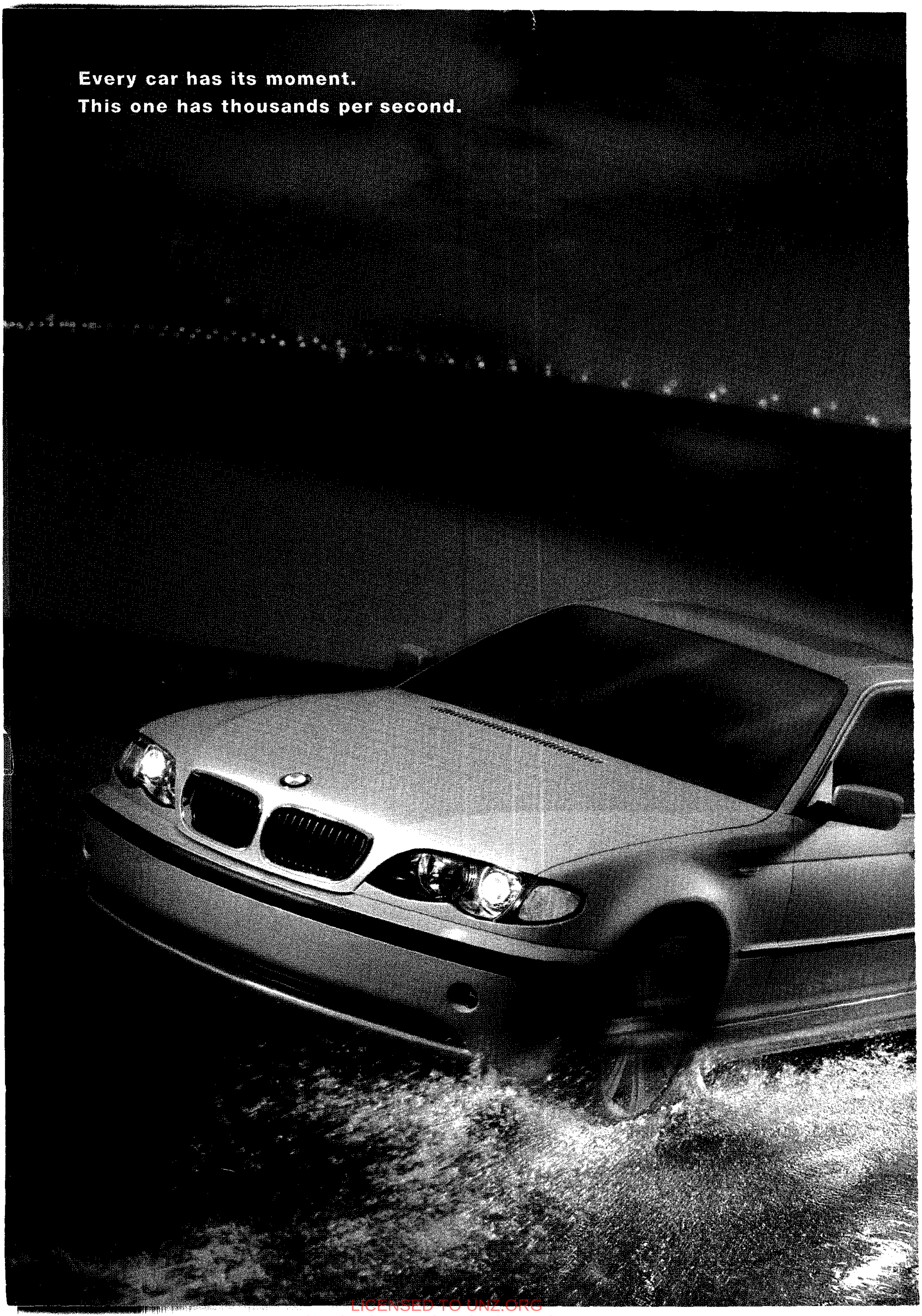
THE NEW YORKER

OCT. 8, 2001

Mattotti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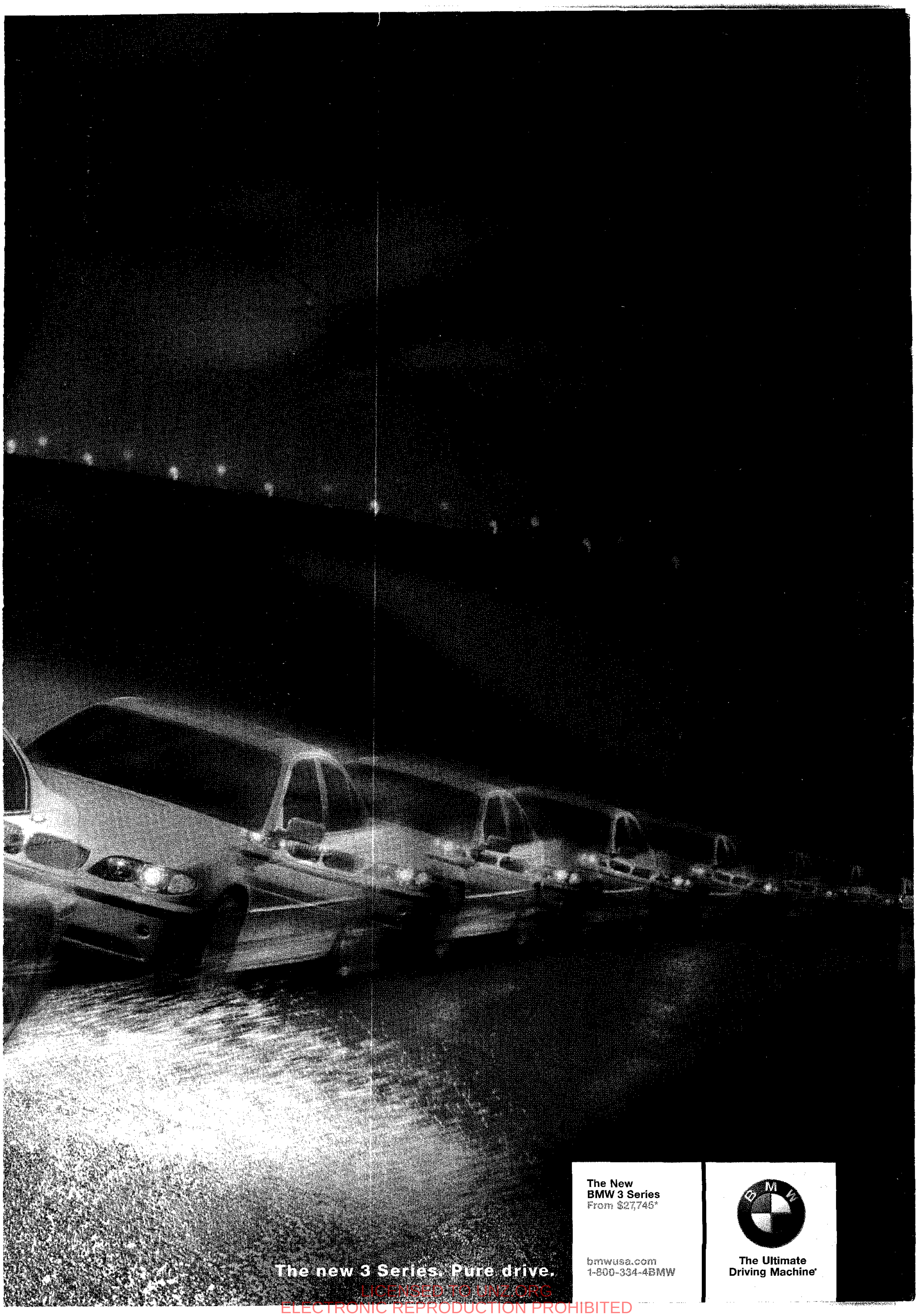
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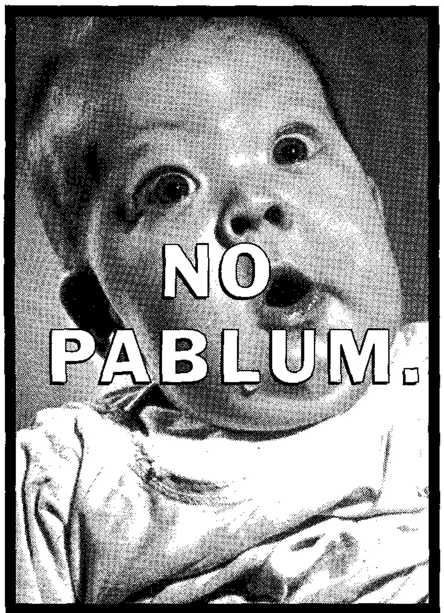

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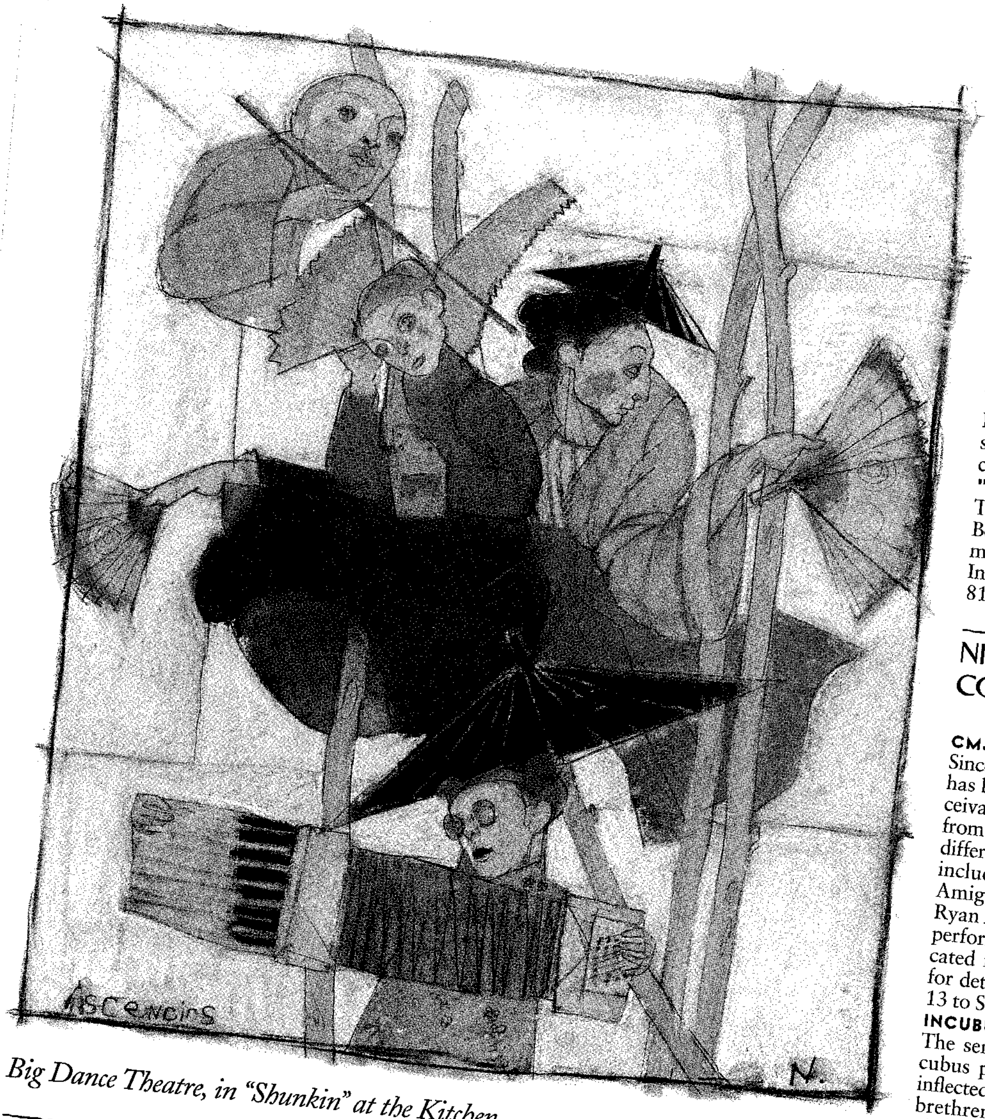

Big Dance Theatre, in "Shunkin" at the Kitchen.

N. ASCENCIOS

DANCE

"CARMEN"

Forty years ago, when he was a bullfighter, the Spanish theatre director Salvador Távora learned "to put onstage what marks you in life." His flamenco version of "Carmen" delivers the Gypsy temptress from her portrayals by Merimée and Bizet and returns her to the Andalusian working class. Távora's great-great-grandmother worked at the Seville cigarette factory where Carmen would have worked if she had in fact existed. In his extensive research for the spectacle, the director discovered that the legendary Carmen was actually a composite of at least two distinct historical figures: one who fought for the rights of factory workers, and another who ran off with a soldier who fought against the crown. As Távora presents her, Carmen fights not with women but for them, in an era when they were beginning to join a newly industrialized workforce. She abandons Don José not because of her fickle heart but because of his monarchist sympathies. And she keeps company not with rogues but with twenty-two Andalusian buglers in military getup, a prancing white horse, and flamenco dancers almost as starkly fierce as she. (City Center, 31 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Sept. 12-14 at 8, Sept. 15 at 2 and 8, and Sept. 16 at 3 and 7. Through Sept. 23.)

"SHUNKIN"

Big Dance Theatre's ingenious directors Paul Lazar and Annie-B Parson have updated Junichiro Tanizaki's 1933 tale of kinky, transcendent love by turning its female protagonist—Shunkin, an impetuous, abusive, seductive, and blind musician—into a present-day rock star. They've added snatches of dialogue from rock documentaries where "people are behaving awfully and perversely," Lazar says, "but then go on to achieve something that the rest of us only aspire to." And Shunkin, played by three actor-dancer-singers in succession, including the adorably odd Gloria Deluxe front woman Cynthia Hopkins, now has a band. "The band hates her, she's completely shitty to them, and just when everybody's on the verge of tears or homicide," Lazar says, "they go into this sweet, sweet song that feels like the pure product of a harmony between them." Is it anything like the actor-director's own experience in the theatre? "I haven't consciously drawn that connection," Lazar says, "but I think there's something there." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St., at Tenth Ave. 255-5793. Sept. 12-15 at 8.)

"GET OUT OF THE HOUSE"

The New York choreographer Sarah Skaggs stages fluid, entrancing dances in odd places—on a fashion runway in an Atlanta club; at the Elks Lodge in Telluride, Colorado; in a marble-floored train station in Lincoln, Nebraska—works that aim to simulate the effects of street accidents. "When there's an accident on the street," she says, "suddenly there's this pocket of energy—and a huge crowd." "Get Out of the House" begins as the sun goes down on the basketball court at Sara D. Roosevelt Park, off East Houston. "The title works like 'Vote,' like a political slogan," she says. "It's saying, 'Get out of your head.'" Just when you're wanting to get in on the action, the six professional dancers take their bows, and the audience is invited onto the court to dance to DJ Red Lips' tunes. Skaggs says, "Paradise isn't this idealized thing. It's real people in front of you, dancing." (Roosevelt Park, on E. Houston be
and Forsyth Sts. 924-0077. Sept. 1
mately 7. Through Sept. 28.)

"LIFE IS RHYTHM"

This Barcelona-based quintet (three da
two percussionists) blends flamenco-fla
and African drumming in a full-lengt
(New Victory, 209 W. 42nd St. 239-62
13-14 at 7, Sept. 15 at 2 and 7, and Sep
noon and 5. Through Sept. 23.)

DANCENOWFEST 2001

This five-venue, hundred-and-forty-five-art
tival includes performances at John Jay C
Williamsburg Art Nexus, the Joyce SoHo, t
Harris gallery, and the Carmine Center
schedule information, see www.dancenow.
call 718-850-2488.)

"MAERCHEN"

Three works, set to scores by composer
Bern and György Ligeti, performed by the
member Eliza Miller Dance Company. (St.
In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St.
8194. Sept. 13-15 at 8:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

CMJ MUSIC MARATHON

Since 1981, *CMJ*, a magazine about new mus
has brought together performers from every co
ceivable genre, from hip-hop to drum-and-bas
from indie rock to riot-grrrl groups. This year is
different, as more than a thousand different banc
including the Venezuelan dance collective L
Amigos Invisibles, the alt-country heartthro
Ryan Adams, and the British superstars Coldplay
perform at just about every venue in town. Dedi-
cated fans should visit www.cmj.com/marathon
for details on the festival, which runs from Sept.
13 to Sept. 16.

INCUBUS

The sensitive face of nü-metal, California's Incubus plies a more emotive brand of hip-hop-inflected rock than most of their more thuggish brethren. The lead singer, Brandon Boyd, has pinup looks and a penchant for shirtlessness, both of which only enhance his appeal to giddy teen-age girls. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Sept. 15-16 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

The fall season starts with a concert of Indian music featuring the sarangi player Ustad Sultan Khan and the vocalist Rashid Khan. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. For more information, call 545-7536. Sept. 15 at 8.)

THOMAS FIELDS

A former proprietor of a zydeco night club in Grand Coteau, Louisiana, Thomas (Big Hat) Fields didn't learn how to play the accordion until he was in his late forties, but that hasn't stopped him from becoming a force on the touring circuit. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. Sept. 16 at 7:30. For more information, call 685-7597.)

KHALED

This policeman's son who is known as the king of *raï* left his native Algeria in 1985 to live in France, where he was relatively free to produce the lyrically forward ("Hey, Mama, your daughter wants me") take on the funky pop music of his homeland. With the Egyptian superstar Hakim. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Sept. 16 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

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—*The New Yorker*

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CONTRIBUTORS

Seymour M. Hersh (“What Went Wrong,” p. 34) has been contributing to the magazine since 1971. He has written seven books, including “The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House.”

Elizabeth Kolbert (“The Chief,” p. 42) is the New York political correspondent for the magazine.

Jeffrey Goldberg (“Behind Mubarak,” p. 48), a staff writer, is working on a book about the Middle East.

Ian Frazier (“Five Fish,” p. 56) will publish a collection of essays on fishing and the outdoors, “The Fish’s Eye,” in the spring.

W. S. Merwin (Poem, p. 65) has a new collection of poems, “The Pupil,” coming out in November.

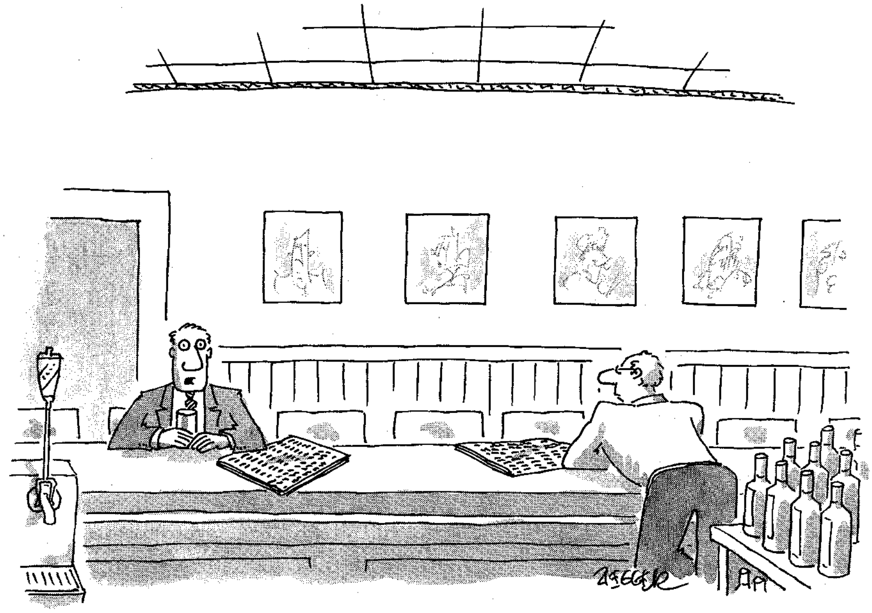
Alice Munro (Fiction, p. 66) is the author of nine short-story collections, including “Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage,” which will be published in November.

Simon Schama (On Photography, p. 81) will publish “A History of Britain, Volume II: The Wars of the British 1603-1776” this month.

Alex Ross (Musical Events, p. 78) is the magazine’s music critic.

Kelefa Sanneh (Books, p. 84) is the deputy editor of *Transition*, an international review of race and culture.

Vijay Seshadri (Poem, p. 90) is the author of “Wild Kingdom,” a collection of poems. He teaches at Sarah Lawrence College. ♦



“I miss the Commies.”

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THE MAIL

NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH

As a Red Sox fan, I never thought I'd find comfort in a late-season Roger Angell story about the team's annual swan dive ("Legends of the Fens," September 24th). But I did, and I thank you for it. After a week of bereavement, Angell provided a distracting salve. And, whether he meant to or not, he also reminded us of some other things: that Boston and New York are inextricably entwined, joined in a symbiosis that extends far beyond the routes of two doomed planes or the rivalry that plays out in the national pastime; and that, while depraved criminals robbed us of many lives, much liberty, and national treasures, we have so much to be thankful for, so many blessings, and so much more living to do, regardless of what happens next.

Dan Daly
Rindge, N.H.

CRIME AND WAR

Hendrik Hertzberg's Comment on "the catastrophe that turned the foot of Manhattan into the mouth of Hell" (The Talk of the Town, September 24th) captured both the implications of the September 11th disaster and the only realistic course of action for a civilized nation such as ours: to treat the investigation of the attacks as "a police matter, of the most urgent kind," rather than a military one. What we need now is an international coalition acting in a precise, measured way on many fronts against terrorism and its perpetrators, not a general war on already oppressed peoples.

Patricia McClung
Palo Alto, Calif.

WHAT COURAGE MEANS

Susan Sontag appears to be confused about the meaning of courage (The Talk of the Town, September 24th). She claims that, merely because the terrorists aboard the hijacked airplanes were willing to die for their cause, they were not cowards. About twenty-three hundred years ago, however, in his Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle made the case that a courageous person is one who faces fearful things as he ought and as reason directs "for the sake of what is noble." If Sontag thinks that the terrorists acted for the sake of what is noble and followed a reasonable course to achieve that end, she should say so, and say why. But, if not, then she would do better to call the terrorists not courageous but rash—"pretenders to courage," in Aristotle's view. Aristotle adds that rash people usually possess "a mixture of rashness and cowardice," for "they do not hold their ground against what is really terrible." Given that the hijackers' accomplices have neither admitted their guilt publicly nor defended it to the world on the basis of reason and virtue, as noble revolutionaries would do, one must conclude that they are cowards, afraid of facing the worldwide anger and scorn they deserve.

George Ochoa
Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.

NOTE FROM THE SKY

"September 11, 2001," the report from *The New Yorker's* correspondents on the events of that day, mentions, among the debris that landed in Brooklyn, a "sheet of notepad paper from the desk of a man named John McLane," whose office was on the ninety-ninth floor of One World Trade Center (September 24th). It may interest you to know that, while John's letterhead was blown across the river, John himself is alive and well, thank goodness. He had an appointment that morning and never made it to the office. As his colleague and friend, I'm grateful to still have John around.

Edward Koral
New York City

•

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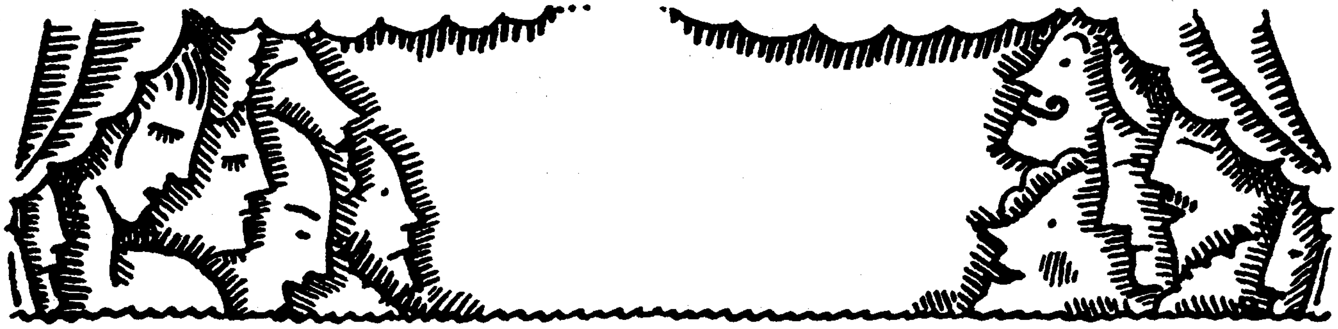

As a result of the World Trade Center tragedy, events may be postponed or cancelled. Please call ahead to verify them.

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AN ADULT EVENING OF SHEL SILVERSTEIN
The Atlantic Theatre Company opens the season with ten one-acts by the writer-cartoonist-composer-lyricist. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

BLOODY POETRY
Howard Brenton's 1984 drama about the relationship between Byron and Shelley. Previews begin Oct. 6. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 674-2716.)

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED)
A revival of Adam Long, Daniel Singer, and Jess Winfield's comedy, in which three actors (Peter Ackerman, Jeremy Shamos, and David Turner) perform thirty-seven plays and a hundred and fifty-four sonnets in under two hours. In previews. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND OTHER BUSINESS
Arthur Miller's 1972 interpretation of the Book of Genesis, staged by Stari Repertory Theatre. In previews through Oct. 4. Opens Oct. 5 at 8. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 870-6784.)

DANCE OF DEATH
Ian McKellen and Helen Mirren portray Strindberg's tortured husband and wife in a new adaptation written by Richard Greenberg and directed by Sean Mathias. David Strathairn, Anne Pitoniak, Keira Naughton, and Eric Martin Brown are also in the cast. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

HEDDA GABLER
Kate Burton has the title role in Ibsen's 1890 play, which has been newly adapted by Jon Robin Baitz and is directed by Nicholas Martin. Harris Yulin and Michael Emerson are also in the cast. Two previews on Oct. 3. Opens Oct. 4 at 6:30. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

IBSEN SERIES
The Century Center's five-year festival continues with "Hedda Gabler." Previews begin Oct. 9. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782.)

MAMMA MIA!
Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus's musical, set on a mythical Greek island, employs the songs of their defunct rock band, ABBA. Previews begin Oct. 5. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 563-5544.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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7	8	9				

METAMORPHOSES
Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of the series of myths by Ovid is set in and around a twenty-seven-foot onstage pool. In previews through Oct. 7. Opens Oct. 9 at 6:30. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

MUSICALS IN MUFTI
The concert series celebrating underappreciated works opens with "The Good Companions," a 1968 musical by André Previn (score), Johnny Mercer (lyrics), and Ronald Harwood (book), based on the J. B. Priestley novel. Oct. 5 at 8, Oct. 6 at 2:30 and 8, and Oct. 7 at 2:30 and 7:30. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIS
David Friend and Simon Morley bring their "genital origami" from the West End to New York by way of Australia, where the show originated in 1996. In previews through Oct. 4. Opens Oct. 5 at 8. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

REBEL WITHOUT A PAUSE
The performance artist Reno, in her latest show. Previews Oct. 4-5. Opens Oct. 6 at 10 and continues through Oct. 21. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

REEFER MADNESS
The 1936 film about the evils of weed has been turned into a musical by Kevin Murphy (lyrics and book) and Dan Studney (music and book). With choreography by Paula Abdul. Andy Fickman is the director. In previews. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

SAVE IT FOR THE STAGE: THE LIFE OF REILLY
Charles Nelson Reilly performs an autobiographical one-man show, which he co-wrote with Paul Linke. Opens Oct. 3 at 7. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

SEXAHOLIX
John Leguizamo's new solo show. Previews begin Oct. 9. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE SHAPE OF THINGS
Gretchen Mol, Paul Rudd, Rachel Weisz, and Frederick Weller are in the cast of the Almeida Theatre Company staging of Neil LaBute's latest play. Mr. LaBute is the director. In previews. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

THOU SHALT NOT
Susan Stroman is the director of a new musical, based on Zola's "Thérèse Raquin" and set in New Orleans after the Second World War, with a score by Harry Connick, Jr., and a book by David Thompson. Craig Bierko, Leo Burmester, Norbert Leo Butz, Kate Levering, and Debra Monk are in the cast. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

UNWRAP YOUR CANDY
From Doug Wright ("Quills") a quartet of dark comedies about parenthood, childhood, secrets, and theatregoing. Leslie Lyles, Reg Rogers, Henry Stram, Michi Barall, and Darren Pettie are in the cast. In previews through Oct. 7. Opens Oct. 8 at 8. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-0303.)

WONDER OF THE WORLD
Sarah Jessica Parker portrays a runaway housewife with a disturbed husband, in a new dark comedy by David Lindsay-Abaire. Amy Sedaris, Alan Tudyk, Marylouise Burke, and Kristine Nielson are also in the cast. Christopher Ashley is the director. Previews begin Oct. 9. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

OPENED RECENTLY

THE BAKKHAI
Euripides' tragedy, set to an "Oriental rhythm techno fusion" score by the Black Moon Theatre Company. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Oct. 7.)

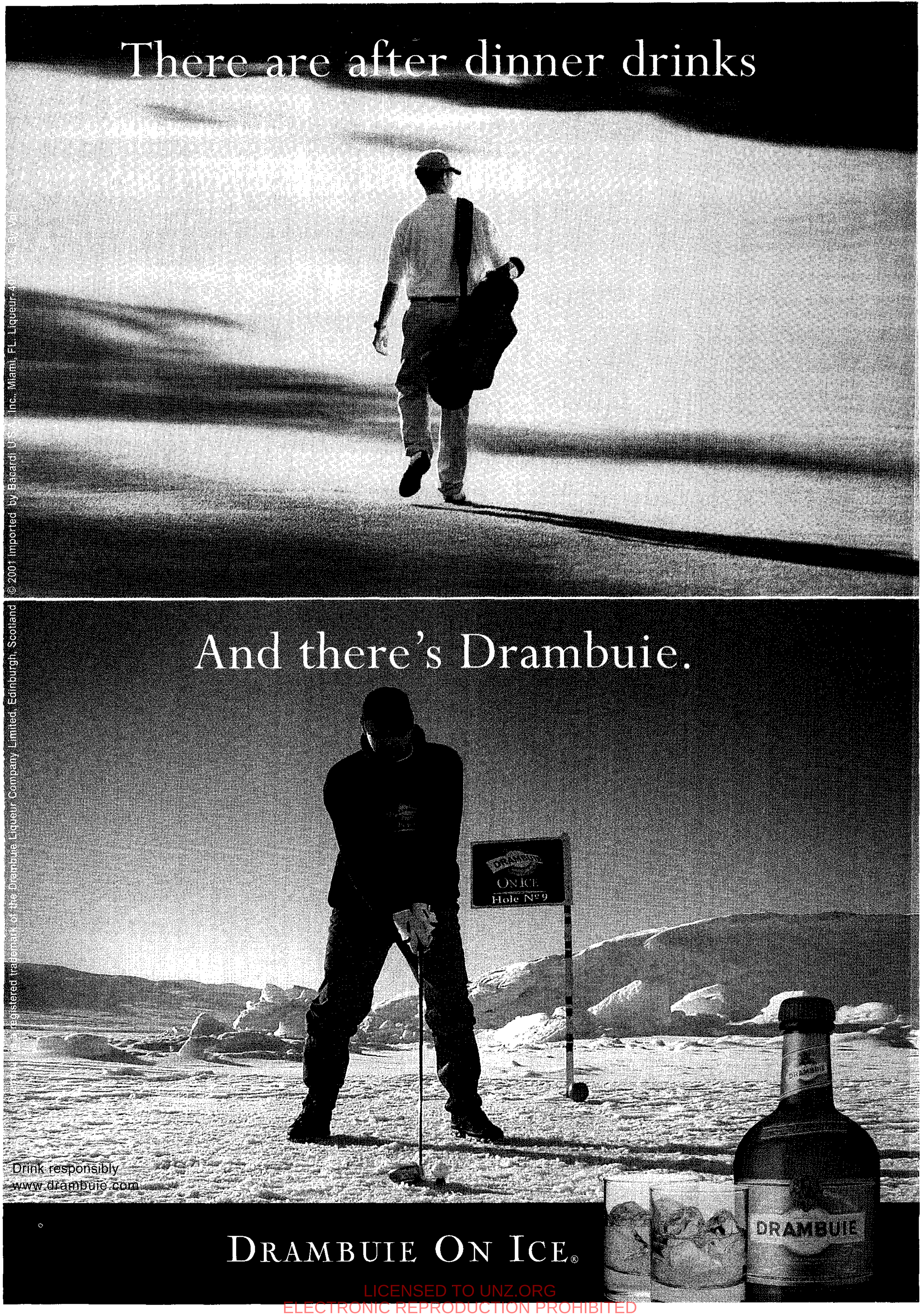
CLOUDSTREET
From Australia's Company B Belvoir, an adaptation of Tim Winton's 1992 novel, set in 1945, about two mismatched families who occupy the same house after fleeing postwar Sydney. Oct. 3-6 at 6:30 and Oct. 7 at 2. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100.)

EXIT THE KING
The Pearl Theatre Company kicks off the season with Ionesco's 1962 tragicomedy. (80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802.)

AN IMMACULATE MISCONCEPTION
A drama by Carl Djerassi, better known as the inventor of the birth-control pill, about sex in the age of fertility treatments. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

IN ON IT
The playwright Daniel MacIvor ("Never Swim Alone") stars with Darren O'Donnell in his latest play, which consists of interconnected stories about the effects of chance. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. 477-5288.)

IONESCO FESTIVAL
The absurdist playwright's œuvre, performed by twenty-nine Off and Off-Off Broadway companies, including the Pearl, the Jean Cocteau Rep, the Looking Glass Theatre, and the Sanctuary Theatre. Through Dec. 2. (For information about schedules, venues, and tickets, call 387-2043.)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THE LAST BARBECUE
Brett Neveu's dark comedy, set during a suburban family picnic. (29th Street Rep, 212 W. 29th St. 465-1714. Closes Oct. 13.)

THE LATE HENRY MOSS
A pair of estranged brothers (Ethan Hawke and Arliss Howard) confront each other after the death of their father, in Sam Shepard's latest play. Joseph Chaikin is the director. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

LOVE
The former television writer and producer David S. Rosenthal's first play, which was inspired by his overwhelming desire to bed a particular supermodel. (East 13th Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 307-4100.)

LOVE, JANIS
A musical play about Janis Joplin, built around her songs, writings, and interviews. Though it contains no new insight, it's a useful corrective to the drunken, drug-addicted legend, and the production is a fine one. Randal Myler directed with a sure eye for the telling detail, and the seven-member band really cooks. (Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.)

THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT
Anne Jackson has the title role and Kim Hunter portrays her friend Mlle. Gabrielle in Jean Giraudoux's 1945 comic fable, in which a group of eccentric women foil an evil plot to destroy Paris. (Neighborhood Playhouse, 340 E. 54th St. 308-6866.)

RUDE ENTERTAINMENT
Three one-acts by Paul Rudnick ("Mr. Charles, Currently of Palm Beach," "Very Special Needs," and "On the Fence"). The casts include Peter Bartlett, Harriet Harris, and Neal Huff. Christopher Ashley is the director. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 239-6200.)

SOME VOICES
The British playwright Jo Penhall's 1994 drama, about a mental patient trying to resist using medications meant to help him lead a normal life. (Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St. 255-3940.)

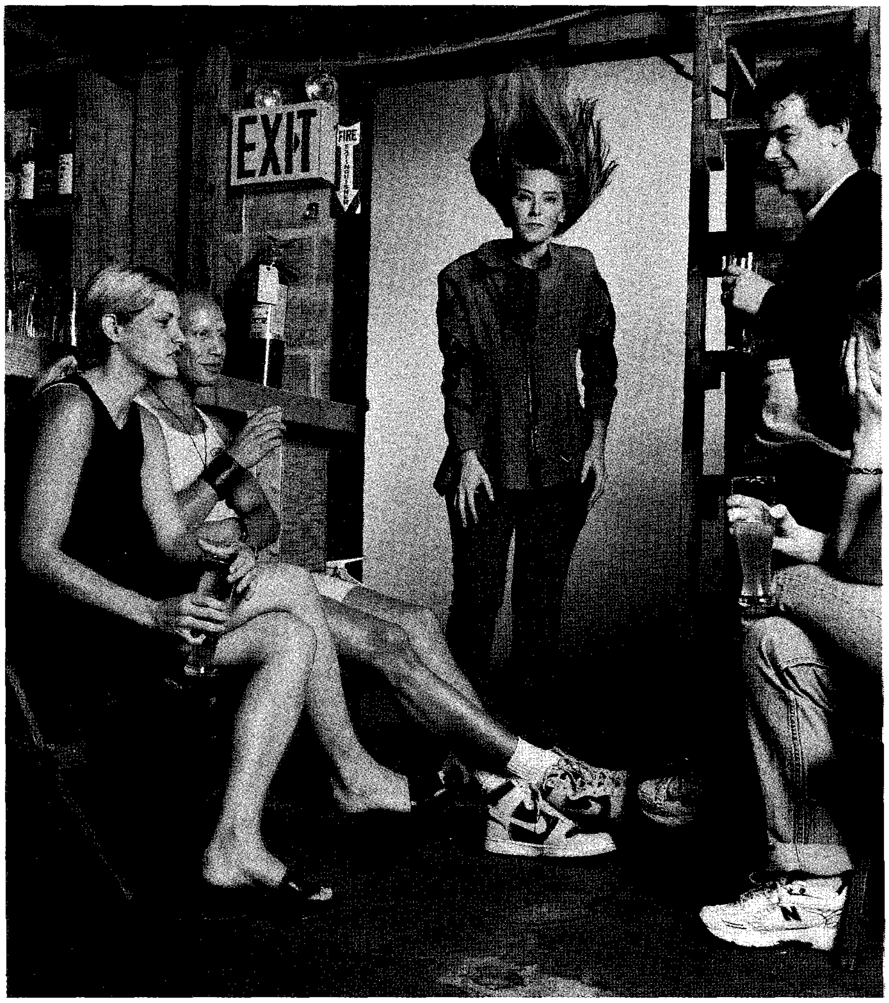
THE SPITFIRE GRILL
James Valcq wrote the music and the late Fred Alley wrote the lyrics for this new musical, based on the 1996 film. (Duke Theatre, 229 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

TALE OF 2CITIES: AN AMERICAN JOYRIDE ON MULTIPLE TRACKS
The "standup novelist" Heather Woodbury uses the Dodgers' departure from Brooklyn in 1957 to examine notions of home and community. The fourth installment in the six-part series is on Oct. 10 at 8. (Galapagos, 70 North St., Brooklyn. 718-384-4586.)

TICK, TICK . . . BOOM!
The title represents the late author Jonathan Larson's fear of time running out on his musical dreams. The show is set on the eve of the composer's thirtieth birthday—his Walpurgisnacht—as he is caught between the pressures to succeed and to settle. The slick, hardworking cast of three is well directed by Scott Schwartz, and, with Larson's plotline deftly reworked by David Auburn, the production has a fetching modesty and reveals Larson's idiosyncrasy, energy, and promise. (7/9/01) (Jane Street Theatre, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

UNI-TARD 2
Three comic solo artists (Mike Albo, Nora Burns, and David Ilku) make an encore appearance together in an evening of special guests, sketches, and monologues. Sundays at 9:30. (Fez, 380 Lafayette St. 533-2680.)

UPPA CREEK
Kara Walker has become known for using the popular nineteenth-century art of cutting paper silhouettes to depict—with pointed, painful humor—the antebellum South. This production, written by Keli Garrett (who also stars), is inspired by that work and by the minstrel tradition. The result, as oxymoronic as it may sound, is a funny evening about the horrors and indignities of slavery. No one, black or white, is spared a moral examination, yet the humor brings this well-trod ground to new and vivid life, ultimately making this far more compelling than many of the earnest dramas on the subject. Ms. Garrett and the rest of the cast give energetic, perceptive performances, and though the production, under Dominic Taylor's direction, has a few rough edges they don't detract from the show's achievements. (Dixon Place, 309 E. 26th St. 532-1546. Closes Oct. 6.)


Heather Woodbury (center) has a new solo show, "Tale of 2Cities."

MATTHIAS CLAMER

URINETOWN
Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis's musical comedy about a city in the throes of ecological disaster, starring John Cullum, has moved to Broadway. John Rando is the director. (10/1/01) (Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 2001: A SPOOF ODYSSEY
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

KISS ME, KATE
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE MUSIC MAN
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.

PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.

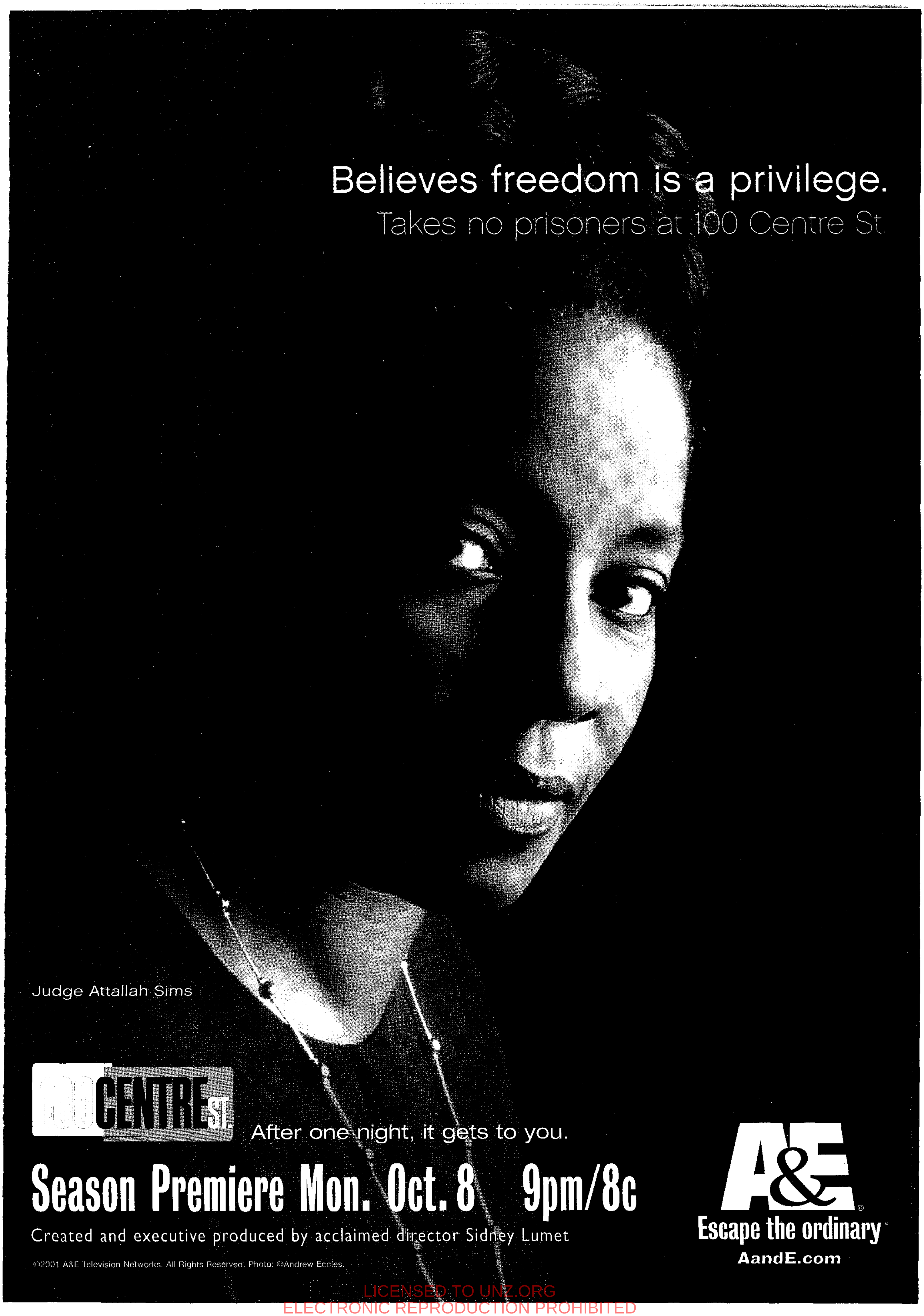
THE SYRINGA TREE
Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 307-4100.

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM
The thirty-seven-member company presents four premières by resident choreographers and works from the repertory. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Oct. 2-5 at 8, Oct. 6 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 7 at 2 and 7.)



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"LUNA"

The O Vertigo company, as part of the Québec-New York festival, presents a full-length work in which the nine dancers move through a nocturnal landscape (with stars, comets, and black holes) while wielding huge magnifying glasses that bring the audience into an unusual intimacy with the details of movement, expression, effort, and pleasure. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 2-5 at 8 and Oct. 6-7 at 2 and 8.)

COMPAGNIE FLAK

The Montreal-based Venezuela native José Navas and Walter Haman, a cellist from Fresno, California, collaborate on a duet that represents new directions for both. Navas, who usually choreographs to commissioned scores and new music, deals with a fixed score, and Haman plays works by composers he has never played before, Britten ("Suite 1 for Cello") and Hovhaness ("Yakamochi"). (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Oct. 4-7 at 8:30.)

"BYE-BYE: THE NEW PRIMITIVE"

Shimizu Shinjin, the director of the sixteen-year-old Gekidan Kaitaisha ("Theater of Deconstruction"), claims that he's trying to show things as they are. According to him, things are absorbing, relentless, silent, and stark. "Bye-Bye: The New Primitive" follows that avant-garde theatrical tradition of self-abasement and physical disintegration in which the Japanese have particularly excelled. The scenes take place in a cyborg netherworld, for example, or on a brightly lit playground populated by a businessman, an aging jock, a rocker dude, and a nubile young woman in her underpants. Some violently flail about, and others catch them tenderly in their arms. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Oct. 4-6 at 8.)

"IKUKO'S ALTER EGO"

The young choreographer Erico Villanueva's kitschy show takes its inspiration from the endless voice-mail rant of a friend who keeps promising she's going to keep it short, the reassuring chakra-babble of body workers, and other banal spoken absurdities. The dancing that bounces off this wall of sound is a mix of super-virtuoso ballet, gymnastics moves, and drama-queen scenes. But the dancers—the diminutive Villanueva; the three statuesque women Deborah Abramson, Jimena Paz, and Annemarie Waltz; and Todd Williams—are powerful enough to burst the show's unravelling seams. (The Flea Theater, 41 White St. 226-2407. Oct. 2 and Oct. 9 at 10. Through Nov. 13.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

TRAVIS

This Scottish outfit has often been labelled, misleadingly, as a more user-friendly Radiohead, thanks to the soaring vocals of its lead singer, Fran Healy, but the truth is it plays rather traditional, if pleasantly depressing, rock with little regard for exploring the sonic frontier. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 3 at 8.)

"JAZZ FROM BUNK TO MONK"

Connecting the dots between the near-primitive New Orleans trumpeter Bunk Johnson and the pianist and composer Thelonious Monk, one of the most sophisticated individualists in the jazz canon, will be only half the fun of this provocative performance. Listening to such accomplished mainstream performers as the trumpeter **Byron Stripling**, the reeds player **Ken Peplowski**, the pianist **Derek Smith**, and the trombonist **Art Baron**, as well as **Eddie Davis** and his **Jazz All Stars**, will be the other. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Oct. 4 at 8.)

BJÖRK

Even without the hype, the questionable swan dress, and the elfin quirkiness, Björk still has that voice, a powerfully emotive force that leaves her critics largely mute. With San Francisco's **Matmos**, a duo known for translating country and folk into avant-garde electronica. (Radio City Music Hall. Oct. 4-5 at 8.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE

The New York Buenos Aires Connection tango ensemble offers an evening of passionate song. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Oct. 5 at 8.) For more information, call 545-7536.

DAR WILLIAMS

The clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter helped redefine folk music in the nineties. After collaborating with fellow folk revivalists Lucy Kaplansky and Richard Shindell for 1998's album of pop covers, "Cry, Cry, Cry," Williams has returned to what she does best—intelligent, soulful songwriting—with her most recent release, "The Green World." (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 6 at 8.)

311

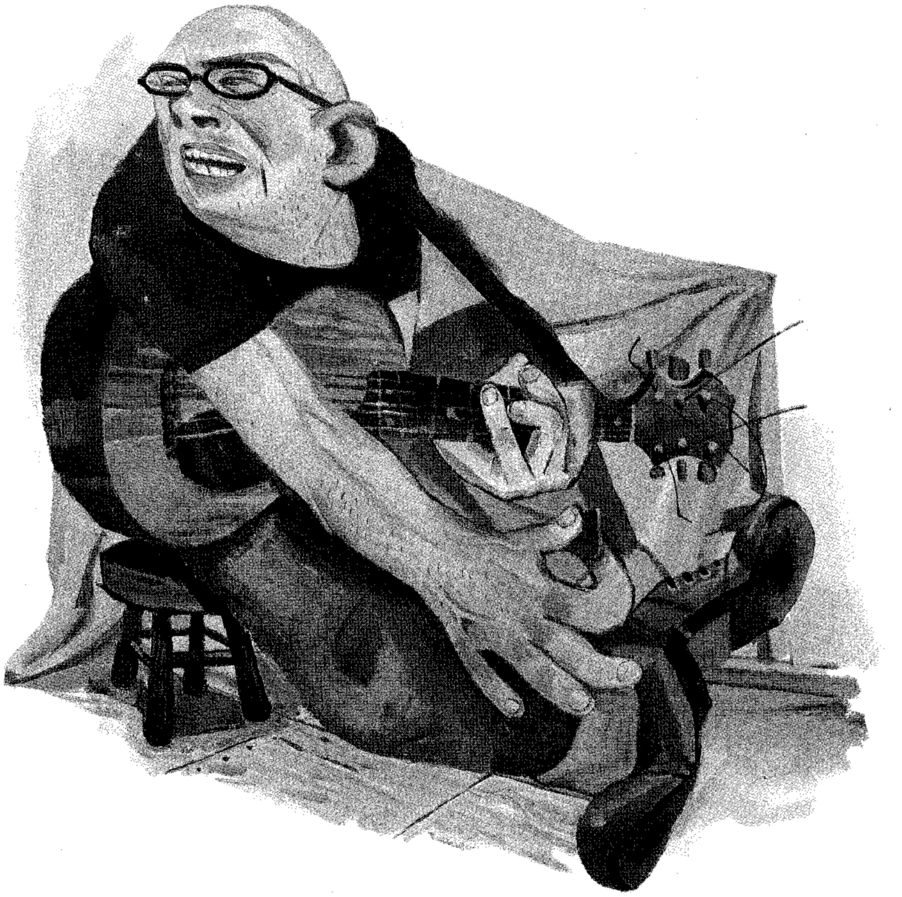
Despite roots that go back to the early nineties, when it was fusing funk and hip-hop with hard guitar rock while the rest of the rock world was still dressed in flannel shirts and playing grunge, 311 has been strangely forgotten by the masses. The members of this Omaha collective accent positivity over angst, and that helps explain why they aren't held in higher regard by today's scowling, baggy-trousered youths. Still, they have a dedicated fan base, and this show is sold out. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. Oct. 7 at 8.)

SIDNEY BECHET SOCIETY

An evening of Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet material presented by some of the most attentive musical archivists in the city (including the guitarist Howard Alden, the drummer Alvester Garnett, and the trombonist Wycliffe Gordon) is a perfect way to cure the blues by embracing their restorative powers. (Theatre at Greenwich Village Center, 219 Sullivan St. Oct. 8 at 6:15 and 8:30. For more information, call 516-627-4468.)

TORI AMOS

Male fans of such celebrated bad-boy musicians as Eminem, Slayer, and the Stranglers may balk at Amos's new album, "Strange Little Girls," which features radical cover versions of their favorite artists' songs. But that's hardly a concern of the outspoken chanteuse. The minister's daughter turned piano-pounding dynamo, who will be taking the stage alone for these shows, lyrically turns the tables, and easily demonstrates that she's as fine an interpreter as she is a songwriter. With **Rufus Wainwright**, whose folk intensity is genetically driven: his parents are Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 9-11 at 8.)



Hamell on Trial, appearing this week at the Village Underground.

ZOHAR LAZAR

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOTTOM LINE

15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Oct. 5: **Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.** Two months shy of his sixtieth birthday, Hicks has probably lost all hope of being recognized as anything but a cult legend. One of pop's finest eccentrics, Hicks spent most of the sixties and seventies as a Bay Area subversive, making disarmingly pungent country-flavored rock and pushing acoustic music into uncharted territory. He basically sat out the eighties and most of the nineties, but over the past few years he's been reclaiming his dyspeptic niche in the rock-and-roll pantheon, by touring sporadically and by producing an album last year, "Beatin' the Heat," which featured contributions by such pop luminaries as Tom Waits, Elvis Costello, Rickie Lee Jones, and Bette Midler. He's back on the road in support of his latest release, the concert record "Alive and Lickin'." Oct. 6: **David Johansen and the Harry Smiths.** Beautiful American music. Johansen's accomplished acoustic band takes its name from the man who put together the hugely influential "Anthology of American Folk Music," the ur-text for Bob Dylan and hundreds of other singer-songwriters.

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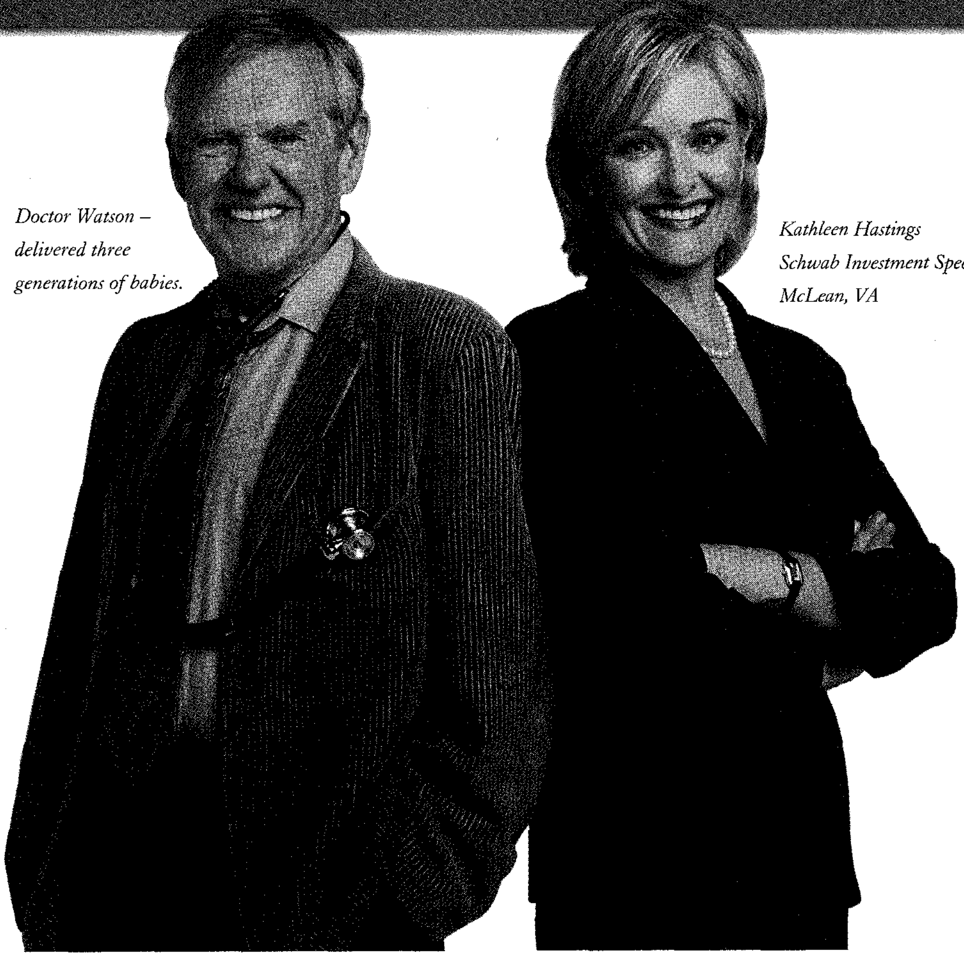

*Doctor Watson –
delivered three
generations of babies.*

*Kathleen Hastings
Schwab Investment Specialist,
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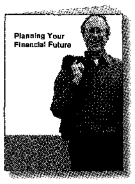

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GALAPAGOS

70 North 6th St., Williamsburg (718-782-5188)—Oct. 6: **Saint Low,** the trio formed by former Madder Rose vocalist Mary Lorson, produces dark, enchanting songs that linger in your mind the way the smoke of an extinguished candle hangs in the room. For this you have to thank Lorson's supple voice and her imaginative songwriting skills. With **Juliana Nash,** the former front woman for the pop-rock band Talking to Animals.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 3: The alternative-country heartthrob and former Whiskeytown front man **Ryan Adams** lays down songs from his sophomore solo release, "Gold." Oct. 4: The hard but hardly new rock and roll of **American Hi-Fi.** Oct. 5-6: The **Waterboys.** The singer-songwriter Mike Scott and his nautically minded ensemble of Celtic folk rockers hope to recapture some of the success they knew back in the late eighties, when their album "Fisherman's Blues" was widely celebrated. Oct. 8: No longer teen-agers, the appealing all-girl glam-punk band the **Donnas** stop by with songs from their aptly titled third disk, "The Donnas Turn 21."

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 3: The **Clogs,** a local quartet led by Padma Newsome, a classically trained violinist and former Fulbright scholar, inaugurates the first of three Wednesday-night sessions this month in the intimate Old Office space. The music handily eludes classification, but fans of Sigur Ros, the Rachel's, and other post-rock ensembles who know how to listen in respectful silence to a live performance will have no trouble appreciating the softly evocative compositions. Oct. 6: The singer-songwriter and slide guitarist **Kelly Joe Phelps.**

MAXWELL'S

1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Oct. 5: **Neko Case and Her Boyfriends.** Before her current incarnation as a country singer, Case was a drummer in a pop-punk outfit, and that hard-hitting sensibility jells perfectly with her dark tales. With the uncooked roots rock of the **Ass Ponys** and the eerie gothic country of Chicago's **Handsome Family.** Oct. 6: The revered and silly musician **Neil Innes,** a founding member of the hilarious Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band and the archetypal parody ensemble the Rutles, teams up with understated indie rockers and local favorites **Yo La Tengo.**

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND

130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—Oct. 4: **Donna the Buffalo,** a winning ensemble from Ithaca, New York, which seasons its country sound with a touch of reggae. Oct. 5: **C. J. Chenier,** son of the legendary zydeco accordionist Clifton Chenier, upholds the traditions of that rural-Louisiana dance music. Chenier the younger straps on his father's old fifty-pound piano-key accordion and leads his Red Hot Louisiana Band through a repertory of waltzes, two-steps, and joist-shaking rhythms guaranteed to make dancers kick off their shoes (and do the old man proud). Oct. 6: **Hamell on Trial.** A thorny folk troubadour who traded in his Pete Seeger records for albums by Lou Reed and Iggy Pop, Ed Hamell delivers dicey urban narratives like a one-man Scorsese flick. With an admirable capacity for detail and the punchy delivery of the Jim Carroll Band circa "People Who Died," Hamell is both an ace storyteller and a credible rocker. Oct. 9: **Neil Innes** and **Yo La Tengo** (see Maxwell's).

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL

59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through Oct. 6: A terrific program featuring three very game and able performers. Essaying some of the kingly songs that have slipped out of the Hollywood Dream Machine are **Eric Comstock,** the rising singer-pianist who seems to have been born and raised in a cabaret; the sly, winning jazz-based vocalist-pianist **Dena DeRose;** and the sensational veteran jazz singer **Bill Henderson.** Dining.

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Oct. 3: The **Avishai Cohen International Vamp Band.** Judging from his work with Chick Corea's Origin band or his trio, Cohen is easily the most exciting new bassist since Christian McBride. With his own ensembles, Cohen goes multicultural, melding international rhythms and textures with urban jazz. Oct. 4-6: **Stanley Jordan.** Look, Ma, four hands! Jordan's ability to wrest symphonic landscapes from his guitar continues to astound. Dining.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Oct. 7: When Milt Jackson, the brilliant vibraphonist and instrumental linchpin of the Modern Jazz Quartet, needed to blow off steam with his own ensembles he often called on the premier bassist (and early M.J.Q. member) **Ray Brown** to anchor the band. The still incomparable Brown pays homage to "Bags" with a series of special guests: the saxophonist **Joe Lovano** sits in Oct. 2-4; the trumpeter **Nicholas Payton** from the 4th to the 7th. The pianist **Monty Alexander** and the saxophonist **Ron Blake** fortify the band throughout the week.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through Oct. 7: The **Stefon Harris** and **Jacky Terrasson** quartet. A snaky way with rhythms and a shared sense of playful sobriety unite the pianist Terrasson and the vibraphonist Harris, fond associates whose new album, "Kindred," highlights their increasingly supple responses to each other. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

TABLES FOR TWO

COOKE'S CORNER

Amsterdam Ave. at 90th St. (712-2872)—Lamb chops or a potpie? A glass of red or a glass of white? That's about as overwhelming as it gets at this corner café, whose small, uncomplicated menu makes it seem like a throwback to simpler times. So do the sweetly innocuous décor (a couple of corn plants, shimmery copper-colored curtains, walls in shades of pale green and gold, an overly bright, impastoed oil painting) and the diners, who tend to greet one another like neighbors in a small town.

You get the feeling when the food arrives that rather than a chef there's a really good cook in the kitchen—and that's meant in the nicest way. On a recent Sunday night, as the place slowly filled with couples and more than a few lone diners, it seemed as though everyone had come to tuck into the tender four-hour-braised beef (with parsnips and carrots in coriander-scented gravy, accompanied by pan-crisped spaetzle), or the mustard-crusted halibut (on a tomato-leek sauce into which those Ping-Pong-ball boiled potatoes, the kind served in your high-school cafeteria, had been dropped). Both dishes are extremely satisfying, but the trio of tiny lamb chops, which come with nothing but a sprig of rosemary and a tremendous potato pancake, is terrific. "That was delicious," a man said, adding, "All I had today was a turkey sandwich," as if to apologize to the waiter for not eating right.

The wine list, which includes several by the glass, is interesting and inexpensive. Like the entrées, several of the unpretentious starters have the effect of a hot toddy during a snowstorm. Rich French onion soup is fortified with wild mushrooms, and the baked goat cheese is just right if you spread it on olive-oil-drizzled toasts and pile the accompanying black-olive-and-tomato salad on top. For dessert, don't bother with anything but a dish of vanilla gelato. Then go straight home and go to bed. (Open daily for dinner. Entrées $13-$24.)

—Emily Nunn

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—**Bill Frisell** (here with his trio through Oct. 14) approaches the guitar the way Miles Davis played trumpet: he's a radical thinker who has transformed the very nature of his instrument. And, like Davis at his best, Frisell loves a lot of legroom in his improvising—where extra space terrifies others, it quickens his blood. Frisell sounds like no one else, mating the tonality of rock with the classic ease and economy of a guitarist like Jim Hall. The violinist **Jenny Scheinman** lends a hand starting Oct. 9. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—The Met celebrates its first acquisition of a painting by the German Romantic Caspar David Friedrich with a small, absorbing show that includes borrowed works by the artist and some of his contemporaries. The acquisition, "Two Men Contemplating the Moon" (1830), is joined by the two other pictures that Friedrich painted of the same scene: figures in autumnal woods gazing at a crescent moon. It represents the mystical extreme of a lunar preoccupation in early-nineteenth-century Germany (think of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata"), which the show documents. But the history lesson takes a back seat to the fraught, slow-acting beauty of the Friedrichs, especially the intoxicating "Moonrise Over the Sea" (1822). A cult hero to other painters even today, he expressed convulsive emotions through motifs of dead calm. His darkly sizzling color anticipates Mark Rothko. Medieval garb and other outlawed iconography of German nationalism add a retrospective whiff of sulfur. Through Nov. 11. ♦ **"Pieter Breugel the Elder, Drawings and Prints"** brings together fifty-four of the sixty-one known drawings by the Flemish artist and sixty prints that he designed. Through Dec. 2. ♦ **"Along the Nile: Early Photographs of Egypt"** documents nineteenth-century Egypt—the pyramids of Giza, the temples of Karnak, Luxor, and Abu Simbel—in forty-three well-preserved prints from the eighteen-forties and fifties. Through Dec. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Olafur Eliasson's **"Seeing Yourself Sensing"** affixes a set of alternating clear and mirrored bars on the lobby windows, so museumgoers see reflections of the lobby, entry desk, and themselves, between glimpses of the dismantled sculpture garden. Eliasson says, "For a while it has been meaningless to speak of objective, autonomous conditions," and perhaps the curators were thinking along those lines, too. Meanwhile, there's something on the windows that partially hides the ongoing construction in the garden. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—**"Sharon Harper: Photographs from the Floating World"** includes black-and-white images of rural scenes taken from a high-speed train, as well as images of clouds in metallic tones. The exhibition inaugurates the Whitney's "First Exposure" series, dedicated to the museum débuts of young photographers. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—**"Meeting God: Elements of Hindu Devotion"** shows the rituals, prayers, customs, and festivals of Hinduism in more than seventy-five photographs, talismans, and video portraits. Accompanied by **"Meeting God,"** an exhibition of photographs of office shrines, taken around New York. Through Feb. 24. ♦ **"The Genomic Revolution"** is as stagy as the museum's permanent wildlife dioramas and as wired as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Throughout the dark, labyrinthine exhibit, sound bites from scientists and Everymen overlap with a soundtrack of doubt-fostering minor-key hums and beeps. The tone tends toward boosterish enthusiasm for progress, with an occasional raised eyebrow; pronouncements like "Our perception of medicine and ourselves is forever changed" are spoken within hearing range of explanations of why it might be unwise to clone Rex or Muffin. (For one thing, two calico cats with the same genes would be unlikely to have the same pattern of spots.) Touch-screen surveys tabulate visitors' responses to controversial questions, and the museumgoers prove much more enthusiastic about genetic technologies than respondents in a recent national sample—at last count, thirty per cent of the visitors would replicate a person. Through Jan. 1. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"My Reality: Contemporary Art and the Culture of Japanese Animation."** *Anime* and *manga*, Japan's alternately sugary and violent caricatures of American animation and comic-book art, have become major influences on a generation of Asian and Western contemporary artists. Lee Bul's opening karaoke booth, "Gravity Greater Than Velocity II," offers the show's lightest and most direct example of the genre's gift for aping and appropriation: singing someone else's songs. Mariko Mori's self-starring sci-fi tableau and Takashi Murakami's shiny pastel mushrooms, whose heavily lashed eyes blink on every side, epitomize the sinister, fun-house twist on cartoon imagery. Kenji Yanobe's "Atom Car (White)," with Geiger counter, parked next door, reminds viewers that everything here is built on the radioactive soil of postwar Japan. Through Oct. 7. ♦ **"Wit and Wine: A New Look at Ancient Iranian Ceramics from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation"** presents vessels, primarily for wine, many shaped like animals or painted with their likenesses. Through Dec. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS
548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—The polymath painter Alfred Jensen, a contemporary of the Abstract Expressionists, drew inspiration from sources as varied as electromagnetic theory, the Mayan calendar, and the "I Ching." Jensen believed that brushwork disrupted the relationship between light and surface, so he squeezed paint directly from tube to canvas; his paintings have a gooey impasto surface. The prismatic palette, which he derived from Goethe's color theory, is limited to primary and secondary colors and black and white. The results resemble giant game boards with fathomless rules. Through June 16. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (423-3200)—Doug and Mike Starn's **"Ramparts Café"** offers visitors seats at only one table, a banquet-size Lucite case filled with transparencies of the Torah, the Koran, a Crusader's Bible, and the New York *Times*, as well as an accumulation of maps and documents that the Starn twins describe as "3,000 years of written accounts of the fighting over Jerusalem." The glass cups and ashtrays filled with Marlboro Light butts on the smudged top seem meant to evoke a friendly chat over the morning paper, but they're also reminders of stressful political strategy sessions and personal crises. Through Feb. 10. ♦ **"Ben Katchor: Picture-Stories"** pulls viewers into a world of deadpan oddity, full of sneakworm infestations, Mortal Coilbrand mattresses, smoke-cured undershirts, and shoes "made of apricot leather for the daughter of a Czar." His best known comic-strip protagonist, Julius Knipl, Real Estate Photographer, is charged with documenting New York's streets and buildings. Like him, the Brooklyn-born Katchor records the passing of neighborhoods and their ways of life. His

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AND: A calendar of
New Yorker events
across the country

compelling drawings and graphic novels, for which he was awarded a MacArthur grant in 2000, appear here in the original and in prints and books, including "The Jew of New York." Through Feb. 10. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

MORGAN LIBRARY
29 E. 36th St. (685-0008)— **"Oscar Wilde: A Life in Six Acts,"** an exhibition imported from the British Library, offers a chronological version of the life of the "lord of language" seen as a succession of juvenilia, manuscripts, love letters, photographs, caricatures, theatre programs, and personal possessions. Sorry, no wallpaper. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5; Fridays, 10:30 to 8; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

HOLLY LANE
These "Small Miracles," elaborately carved triptychs and shrines housing dreamy little landscapes with the occasional thoughtful young woman subject, look like the artifacts of a religion that worships Celestial Seasonings tea boxes. "Caught in a Wind No One Else Felt" offers a Narnia-like scene of a blonde standing on a field above the sea looking surprised at her lush surroundings. Gathered around her feet are a few items that seem to have accompanied her from the more mundane world, including her glasses, a book, and a slice of cheesecake. Through Oct. 6. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122.)

TIM LITZMANN
To create these wan riffs on minimalism, the artist applies contrasting pigments to the back and edges of sheets of etched acrylic, so that each monochrome panel emits an aura at its perimeter. Yellow bleeds red, gray glows chalk-line blue, and so on. Litzmann's art-historical references run the gamut from Barnett Newman's zips (in several works the panels are joined to form diptychs and triptychs) to early Brice Marden to the machined gleam of a Donald Judd stack. Through Oct. 20. (Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929.)

BRUCE MC CALL
Satirical fantasies (many of which appeared in *The New Yorker*) of a pseudo-future as it might have been imagined by fifties-era Utopians. Through Oct. 30. (James Goodman, 41 E. 57th St. 593-3737.)

CHRISTINA RAMBERG
Ramberg (1946-95) stopped working long before her death—the paintings and drawings in this show were all done between 1968 and 1982, just before she came down with Pick's disease, a sort of early-onset Alzheimer's-like dementia. The works reflect the artist's youth and the obsessions of the seventies. Her rows of corsets, in pen and in oil, look like Warholia, and recall Hans and Hilla Becher's photographs of water towers. Her paintings, like the vintage dolls, lingerie, women's magazines, and comic books she collected and studied, worship the feminine, but darkly. Through Oct. 13. (Baumgold, 74 E. 79th St. 861-7338.)

GERHARD RICHTER
A big show of new paintings bolsters a case for the sixty-nine-year-old artist as the most profound and challenging painter of our time. Most are grayish abstractions that give perplexingly mixed signs of intention and chance. Mechanically smeared paint effaces any sense of an underlying image or a personal touch and, at the same time, generates an image and a gesture in its own right. Augustly controlled composition and achingly sensitive color emit a sort of grand, melancholy songfulness. Also in the show are works in Richter's Photo-Realist mode, notably a pair that picture his baby son, Moritz, in a high chair. The boy's grave, chubby face is splotched with spaghetti sauce, and he clutches a spoon like a dagger. The infantile chaos of the subject and the Old Masterish look of the form make for a piquant composition. One suspects a portrait of the artist as a very, very young man. Through Oct. 27. (Marion Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160.)

JOHN SLOAN
Sloan, renowned for his urban scenes, was also a lifelong portraitist. This selection, which begins in the late eighteen-hundreds with William Glacken and ends in 1950 with Helen Sloan, falls into three distinct periods. In the first decade, he insightfully followed fashion, spotlighting elegant subjects on dark backdrops. In his middle period, his colors brighten and his hand loosens. In later years, Sloan laid a fingerprintlike lattice of dark lines across the surface of the skin, particularly on the face, in a move often so unflattering that one can imagine the sitters asking to photograph the work before the stripes were put on. Through Oct. 27. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 307-5730.)

DOROTHEA TANNING
One sculpture from 1969 and works on paper from the last two decades by Dorothea Tanning, the ninety-one-year-old American surrealist. There has been no diminution in her channelings of psychosexual abandon, which remain foxily seductive even when displaying such dire motifs as the collaged photograph of an aged hand bound with twine. It seems that in the eighties Tanning dreamed a lot about accident-prone bicycles, which in several drawings warp and splinter and launch what appear to be flying, flailing bodies. Her sculpture, "Reclining Nude," is a Plexiglas-encased wonder of a headless, legless, three-armed figure in stitched pink fabric stuffed with wool and (for vertebral bumps) Ping-Pong balls. The work hints at nastiness, but the artist's peremptory charm makes it feel, finally, like a difficult, dear friend. Through Oct. 13. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St., 752-1223.)

ROBERT THERRIEN
More unnecessary exercises in post-minimalist attitude from an artist who has achieved unaccountable success with gigantesque and pointlessly well made sculptures of common objects. The drawings and two sculptures here recycle other artists' ideas in toneless, spunkless ways. An elaborate pedestal supporting a metal teardrop and a set of big enamelled Dutch doors recall the styles of Richard Artschwager and John McCracken, respectively, but without their strengths. The drawings are overlarge, perfunctory renderings of such surefire signifiers as a coffin shape and Donald Duck's quacking bill. Through Oct. 27. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313.)

Short List

BENJAMIN EDWARDS
Artemis Greenberg VanDoren, 730 Fifth Ave.,
at 57th St. 445-0444. Through Oct. 6.

KOJO GRIFFIN
Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 1018 Madison Ave.,
at 78th St. 744-7400. Through Oct. 13.

AL HELD
Ameringer Howard, 41 E. 57th St. 935-1110.
Through Oct. 13.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

ALBERT CONTRERAS / MATT MARELLO
After a successful West Coast career in the mid-sixties, Albert Contreras gave up painting. This, his first New York solo show, signals a welcome return. To create his gooey, pint-size abstractions of plaid and checkerboard motifs, Contreras employs acrylic paint thickened with gel in an eye-popping palette of primary colors. Marello, a video artist, inserts his face into television and film with ridiculous results. For instance, in his newest work, "The Fight," Marello appears as both combatants in a boxing match, beating himself to a bloody pulp. Through Oct. 6. (Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318.)

NANCY DAVIDSON
The artist makes folderol out of fetishes by dressing up latex weather balloons in saucy stuff like satin,

DUPUY-BERBERIAN

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Bleecker Street Irregulars

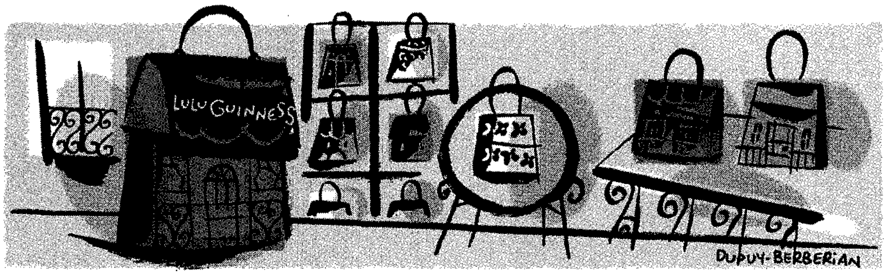
Niall Smith has something in his shop that would have been perfect for Charles A. Carter, who lived at 123 Bleecker Street in the middle of the nineteenth century and whose portrait hangs in the Museum of the City of New York. It's a circa-1840 brass-and-bamboo walking stick with an ivory handle that unscrews to reveal a rod used for measuring horses ($1,250), and it's one of a collection of canes and sticks at **NIALL SMITH** (344 Bleecker St.; 255-0660). "I've had this hellhole for thirty-one years," says Smith, an Irishman whose gruff exterior belies a gracious heart. The hellhole in question is a store with an air of Old World gentility which seems as though it should be located in the tonier regions of London's Portobello Road rather than across the street from a place called Condomania. "I deal almost exclusively in early-nineteenth-century, European, neoclassical antiques—Biedermeier, bronzes," Smith says, adding that he doesn't mind indulging shoppers who may not know much about Victorian basalt Wedgwood candlesticks or shagreen-covered desk sets. "After all, it's how I learned, going in and out of antique stores. Smart-asses may get your back up, but people are 99.9 per-cent fabulous."

If Smith cossets his shop with paisley and plush, **SUSAN PARRISH** (390 Bleecker St.; 645-5020) has kept the floorboards and tin ceiling intact, the better to display a breathtaking array of early quilts, Indian blankets, rag rugs, and folk-art objects. Among the pristine coverlets is a flag quilt whose creator offers a highly original interpretation of Old Glory with a loopy star-studded square set in the wrong corner ($4,500). A twenty-eight-piece wooden Noah's ark contains carefully hewn beasts along with Mr. and Mrs. Noah, she in the typical long dress and shawl of a nineteen-thirties farmwife ($4,800).

There's a silver ring set deep in the ear of Shane Yamane, the salesman at **MARC JACOBS** (403 Bleecker St.; 924-0026), a once-ordinary storefront transformed into a temple of modernism by way of teal ottomans and a glossy lavender-painted floor. Jacobs, the fashion designer responsible for both the Louis Vuitton collection and his own lines, has long been fond of the West Village, and his wares—thick-heeled scarlet Minnie Mouse sneaker pumps ($198), rumpled taupe corduroy coats for female Columbos ($428)—break new ground in the neighborhood.

Lulu Guinness seems to have taken a wrong turn on her way to Bleecker Street and ended up in nineteen-fifties Paris—or at least cinematic Paris, where Leslie Caron works at a perfumery and Gene Kelly dances up the steps of Sacre Coeur. Guinness, a British handbag designer, has tarted up her boutique, **LULU GUINNESS** (394 Bleecker St.; 367-2120), with a striped, scalloped awning, painted the floor in huge chessboard squares, and added a plethora of étagères, wrought-iron mirrors, and spindly chairs. The Francophilia is not confined to the décor but extends to the merchandise, notably purses decorated with rhinestone-collared poodles ($90) and satin minaudières shaped like flowerpots ($595). Those who want to take the whole shop home also have an option: there's a satchel shaped like a miniature Lulu Guinness store—the roof lifts off—with handbag-filled windows and the designer's name embroidered in tiny script on the canopy.

—*Lynn Yaeger*



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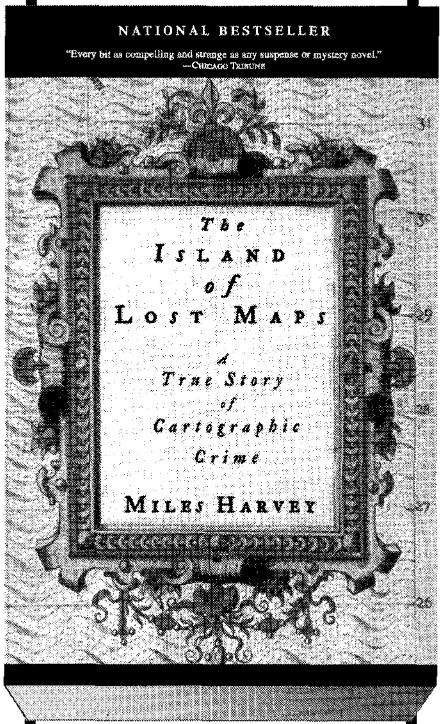
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lace, fishnet, spandex, vinyl straps, and flouncy tulle. The exhibition, with its modestly scaled globes corseted in reflective Plexiglas panels and humongous inflatables stuffed into giant G-strings, sounds roughly the same note as Madonna's "Sex" book. One work, "Buttress," purportedly inspired by Brancusi's "Endless Column," presents a stack of oversized pink buttocks in silver lamé hot pants: a tower of mooning kitsch. Through Oct. 6. (Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 366-4774.)

JAY DAVIS

If Piranesi had had a PlayStation, his work might resemble these slick paintings in which meticulously rendered architectural vignettes float against looming fields of deep outer space. Rendered on vinyl and overlaid with coats of polymer, the shiny objects look more like screens than canvases, just as the drips that skitter near the precise imagery recall static more than Pollock. It should come as no surprise to learn that the artist worked in a video arcade as a teen-ager. Through Oct. 6. (Stux, 529 W. 20th St. 352-1600)

WOLFGANG STAEHLE

Since this show opened, the work here has undergone a shift no one anticipated. The Internet-art pioneer had planned to present "visceral experiences in synchronicity" and an "instantaneous compression of time and space," with live Web feeds from Berlin's spindly communications tower and the Comburg monastery near Stuttgart. However, those two works have been overshadowed by the more elemental power of a third: a real-time video panorama of the lower-Manhattan skyline. The piece originally had something to do with physical presence (gallerygoers are nearly as large as the buildings projected here); now it confronts the city's great loss with unflinching immediacy. Through Oct. 6. (Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 229-2829.)

HIROSHI SUNAIRI

The artist was last seen making psychedelic photo-collages from erotic self-portraits. For his second show, Sunairi moves beyond the mirror to "Muga," the Japanese word for self-effacement, which festoons the entrance to the gallery in the form of a giant collage. The showstopper here is a painted wood sculpture, "Buddha," which sprawls along the gallery floor, equal parts jigsaw puzzle and jungle gym. Distinct forms emerge from the colorful jumble—an outstretched hand, a pair of feet, an elephant's trunk. Selflessness has never looked more appealing. Through Oct. 6. (Kreps, 516 W. 20th St. 741-8849.)

KARA WALKER

Four years ago, at the age of twenty-seven, Walker won a MacArthur Foundation grant for her mural-size silhouettes of Civil War-era masters and slaves. The cutouts, which continue to provide a discomfiting mixture of decoration and confrontation, are embellished here with illuminated projections, ranging from a red-blue-and-green landscape evocative of Colorforms to a nineteenth-century illustration of a steamboat. It's heartening to see the artist expanding her already powerful vocabulary, but the projections dilute more than they enhance. The back gallery features a salon-style installation of small drawings and selected writings. Through Oct. 13. (Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. 929-2262.)

Short List

RODNEY GRAHAM

303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.
Through Oct. 27.

DAVID KORTY

Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770.
Through Oct. 19.

DAVID RATHMAN

Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937.
Through Oct. 6.

PETER WEGNER

Mary Boone, 541 W. 24th St. 752-2929.
Through Oct. 20.

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

PAUL CHOJNOWSKI

Chojnowski's medium precludes setting up an easel and working in the field: he photographs for reference, then goes back to the studio to burn his images onto wet paper with a blowtorch. The elegant night city scenes that dominate this collection almost all meditate on variations of the same composition, the view up an alley of buildings, out of which a set or two of headlights shine a bright path down the paper to the viewer's eye (one shows the Brooklyn Bridge, with the East River as the shining path). The attempts at darker, rural scenes, in "Pines at Sunset" and "Light Through the Trees," are not as successful as the dizzying cityscapes. Through Oct. 13. (Bridgewater, Lustberg, 560 Broadway. 941-6355.)

MICHELLE LOPEZ

Sculptures of unidentifiably salacious objects (oyster? macadamia nut? pancreas?) covered in glistening, pettable deerskin, calfskin, pony skin, etc. The underlying flirtatiousness is made explicit in the show's title, "Adventures in the Skin Trade." The imaginary glands are legitimately well made and fashionable, as if Vuitton had designed artificial organs, but they're all ridiculously subliminal, with lumpish labiomorphs and phallaciousness. The effect of such teasing is both an homage to and a sendup of the desirable. Through Oct. 27. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

Short List

ANYA GALLACCIO

Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753.
Through Oct. 20.

DAN MC CLEARY

Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863.
Through Oct. 6.

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

HOWARD MC CALEBB / AMANDA TRAGER
These two artists arrive at different distillations of message glut. McCalebb, turning his attention to tabloid ads that promise cures for low self-esteem and shyness, makes painted collage works that are inexplicably shaped like time-clock punch cards. Trager lifts phrases from a variety of high and low sources to arrive at Expressionistically stencilled signboards. The most urgent of these looks like a giant Giacometti sculpture and speaks with the traumatized voice of a Beckett character. Through Oct. 15. (Momenta, 72 Berry St. 718-218-8058.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Oct. 3 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Photographs. The sale abounds in portraits of such cultural figures as Stravinsky, Klee, Eliot, and Katharine Hepburn (by George Hoyningen-Huene, Man Ray, and others); also featured are three platinum prints of images by Tina Modotti (including "Calla Lily," from 1925) and a suite of photographs by Harry Callahan of his wife ("Eleanor"). ♦ Oct. 5 at 10:15 A.M.: A selection of Old Master paintings. ♦ Oct. 6 at 10:15 A.M.: Wine from the cellars of four collectors, including an impressive selection of historic vintages from Château Haut-Brion. ♦ Oct. 6 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Part II of a sale of the Harriman-Judd collection of British art pottery, including many fanciful works of stoneware from Martin Brothers along with a broad range of pieces from the Doulton and Della Robbia firms. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
Oct. 3 at 10 A.M.: Early Old Master paintings, including works by van Goyen and Jan Brueghel. ♦ Oct. 4 at 10 A.M. and 2: Photographs by such figures as Arbus, Stieglitz, Strand, and Man Ray, whose "Untitled (Rayograph)" (estimated to bring up to two hundred thousand dollars) is the highlight of the sale. Also included are forty-four daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and tintypes of African-Americans circa 1845-65. ♦ Oct. 5 at 10 A.M. and 2: A sale of wine. ♦ Oct. 8 at 6:30 and Oct. 9 at 10 A.M. and 2: The Abel E. Berland collection of English literature, science, philosophy, and incunabula, including a "Four Folios" set of Shakespeare's plays. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CHRISTIE'S EAST
Oct. 3 at 10 A.M.: American paintings and sculpture. ♦ Oct. 5 at 10 A.M. and 2: The smaller house offers its own sale of photographs, including work by Avedon, Weston, and Cartier-Bresson. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

DOYLE
Oct. 3 at 10 A.M.: Furniture, paintings, and decorations from the Victorian, Edwardian, Art Nouveau, and Art Deco periods, including the art collection of the legendary Broadway restaurant Mamma Leone's. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

GRAMERCY PARK MODERN SHOW
A hundred-dealer show of twentieth-century art and design, featuring paintings, textiles, jewelry, and much else from the Art Nouveau, Arts-and-Crafts, and Art Deco movements. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 25th St. 255-0020. Oct. 5-7. **Note:** The venue for this event may be changed. Please call to confirm.)

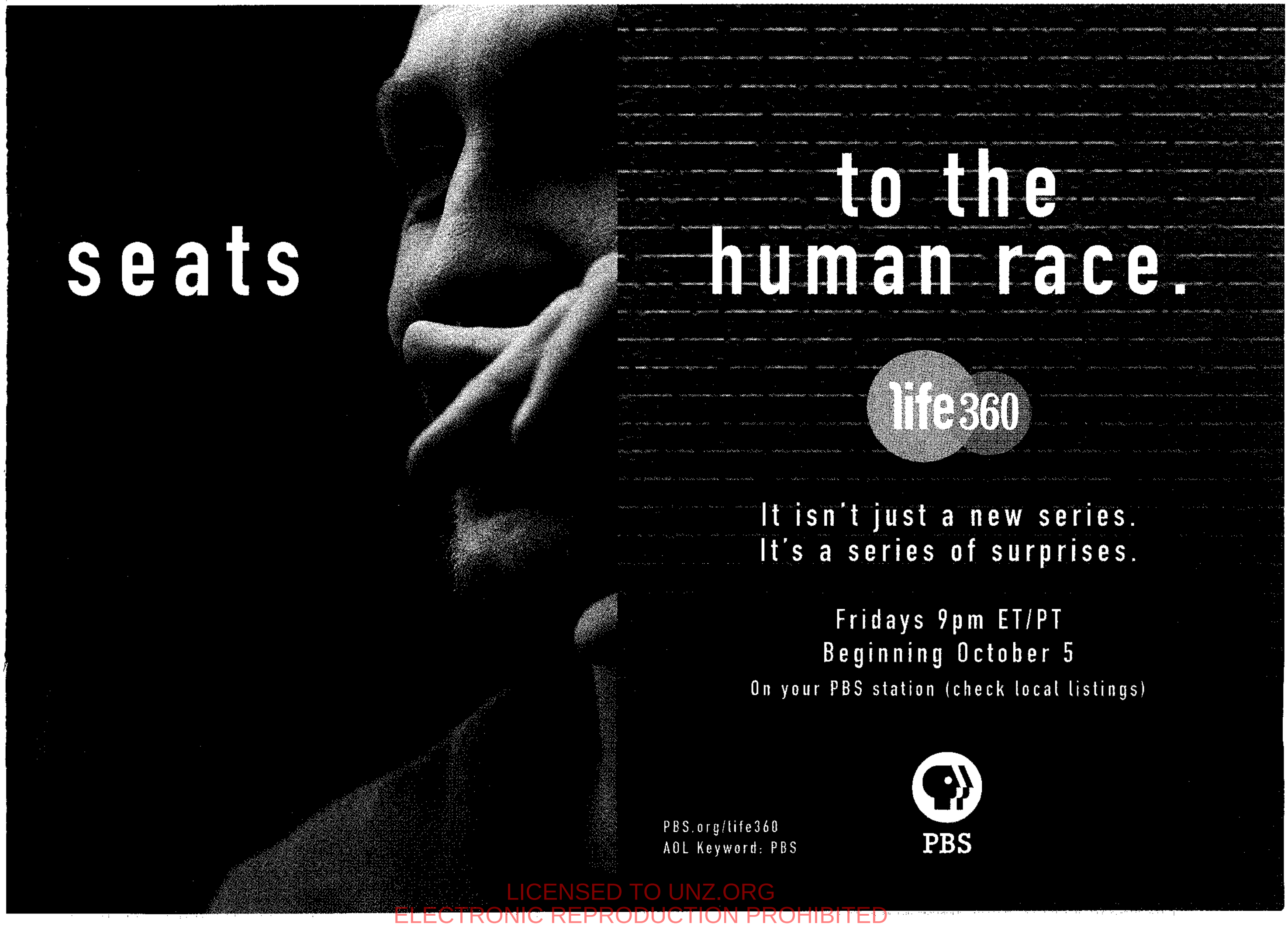
PHOTOGRAPHY

LARRY FINK
This greatest-hits compilation of Fink's most influential work, the "Social Graces" series, brings out vintage black-and-white prints of nineteen-seventies New York society: Museum of Modern Art benefits, débutante balls, and Studio 54 parties. With his simple and ingenious trademark device, a flash held apart from the camera, Fink sets up spotlit dramas surrounded by looming shadows—pearls, fur coats, and champagne flutes glisten, and faces seem all the more made up as the flash glances off them. Through Oct. 13. (Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

MARIO GIACOMELLI (1925-2000)
Aerial photography never looked so beautiful as in the hands of this Italian postwar master. In his youth, Giacomelli shot the plowed fields of rural Italy as rambunctious geometric patterns. Then in the nineteen-eighties, he flew over his home town of Senigallia, on the Adriatic coast, to record these scenes of beach life, called "Il Mare dei Miei Racconti," which the gallery translates as "The Sea of My Memory." They evoke both summertime nostalgia and the ease with which modern surveillance can take in even the most innocent activity—some look like peacetime takes on reconnaissance pictures, with striped umbrellas as targets. And in many, the high-contrast array of bodies against wrinkled sand makes for intricate abstract compositions. Through Oct. 20. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

KENRO IZU
In the course of his twenty-two-year "Sacred Places" project, this intrepid photographer of religious buildings and sacred land has hauled his large-format camera to some really remote piles of rocks. This time he headed high up into the mountains of Cambodia, India, Tibet, and China. As usual, the platinum-printed results are gorgeous, and much more than architectural documents. Izu's weather-beaten shrines seem to have been adopted by the craggy peaks they were built to honor. Through Oct. 20. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster. 334-0010.)

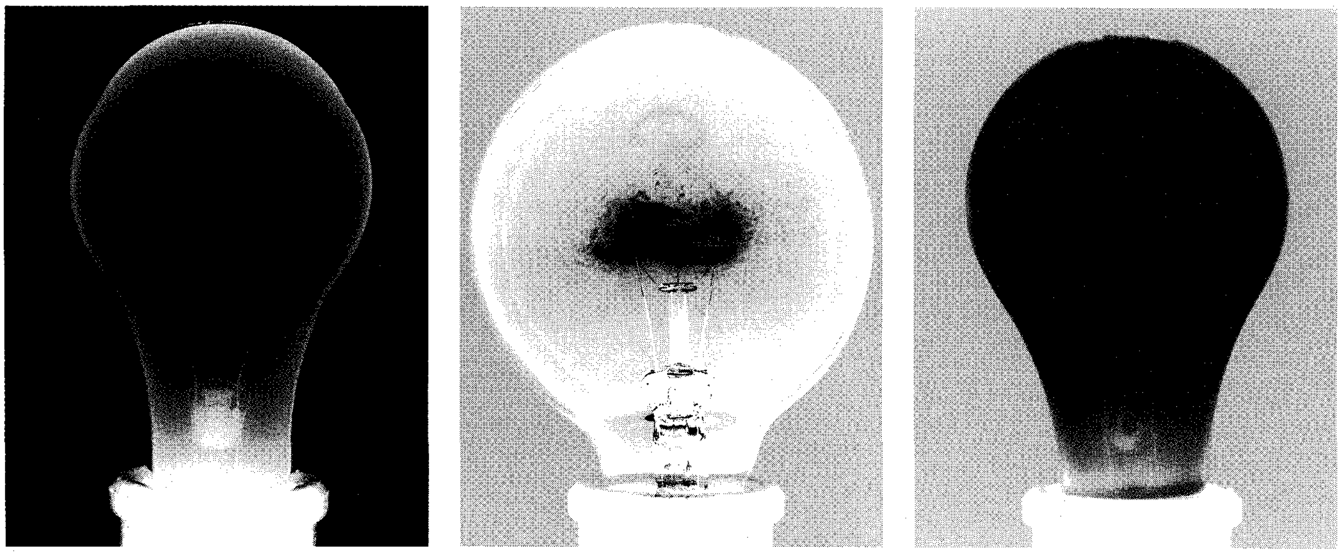
"101 BOOKS"
This show of seminal photography books of the twentieth century begins with Alvin Langdon



Coburn's "London" (1909) and goes through to David LaChapelle's "LaChapelle Land" (1996). The volumes in between include a *Camera Work* issue devoted to Paul Strand (1917), Leni Riefenstahl's "Schönheit im Olympischen Kampf" (1937), and work from more recent leaders and mavericks—Peter Beard, Michael Lesy, and Allen Ginsberg make it in. The show is a pleasure, but most of all it's an excuse for a lush catalogue, "The Book of 101 Books" (2001). Through Nov. 3. (Roth Horowitz, 160A E. 70th St. 717-9067.)

Short List

AMY ARBUS
Bateman, 560 Broadway. 227-1431.
Through Nov. 14.



Amanda Means's black-and-white and color portraits of light bulbs are at Ricco/Maresca through October 13.

JEFF BROUWS
Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 989-7600.
Through Nov. 3.
JOHN COFFER
The Viewing Room, 114 W. 17th St.
646-638-1920. Through Oct. 31.
MARK COHEN
Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930.
Through Nov. 10.
PAUL D'AMATO
Milo, 552 W. 24th St. 414-0370.
Through Oct. 27.
PHILIP-LORCA DI CORCIA
PaceWildenstein Chelsea, 534 W. 25th St.
929-7000. Through Oct. 13.
PAUL FUSCO
Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.
Through Oct. 13.
LUIGI GHIRRI / TODD HIDO
Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. 627-2410.
Through Oct. 20.
AMANDA MEANS
Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.
Through Oct. 13.
LARRY SULTAN
Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166.
Through Oct. 13.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's 1982 production of Mozart's **"Idomeneo"** returns (directed by David Kneuss) with an impressive cast, featuring Dawn Upshaw, Carol Vaness, Susan Graham, Plácido Domingo, Mark Oswald, Antonio Barasorda, and Hao Jiang Tian; the conductor is James Levine. (Oct. 3 and Oct. 6 at 8.) ♦ Tchaikovsky's **"Eugene Onegin,"** with Solveig Kringelborn, Katarina Karnéus, Marcello Giordani, Thomas Hampson, and Robert Lloyd; Vladimir Jurowski. (Oct. 4 and Oct. 8 at 7:30.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** with Hei-Kyung Hong and Marcello Giordani as Mimi and Rodolfo, and Inva Mula and Bruno Caproni as Musetta and Marcello; Carlo Rizzi. (Oct. 5 at 8.) ♦ With Frank Lopardo replacing Giordani. (Oct. 9 at 8.) ♦ The last performance this season of Berg's **"Wozzeck,"** with Katarina Dalayman (as Marie), Wolfgang Neumann, Graham Clark, Falk Struckmann, and Michael Devlin; James Levine. (Oct. 6 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Bellini's **"The Capulets and the Montagues,"** directed by Thor Steingraber. With Mary Dunleavy (as Juliet), Sarah Connolly (as Romeo), Raul Hernandez, Jan Opalach, and John Marcus Bindel; Joseph Rescigno conducts. (Oct. 3 at 7:30, Oct. 5 at 8, and Oct. 7 at 1:30.) ♦ **"The Magic Flute,"** sung in English, with Pamela Armstrong, Aline Kutan, John Osborn, Daniel Belcher, Gustav Andreassen, and Keith Jameson; David Agler. (Oct. 4 and Oct. 9 at 7:30.) ♦ Jonathan Miller's production of **"The Mikado,"** with Jan Opalach (in the title role), Angela Turner Wilson, Linda Roark-Strummer, Jennifer Dudley, Richard Troxell, and Richard Suart; Gerald Steichen. (Oct. 6 at 1:30.) ♦ Verdi's **"Macbeth,"** a return of the 1997 production, with Richard Paul Fink in the title role and Lauren Flanigan reprising her role as Lady Macbeth. Despite its stylistic discontinuities (it was written in 1847 and extensively revised eighteen years later), this trenchant Shakespeare adaptation is more notable for its dramatic ambience than for its individual moments—though Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene remains one of the composer's most haunting creations. George Manahan conducts. (Oct. 6 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 307-4100.)

LA GRAN SCENA OPERA CO.
It scarcely seems believable, but after two glorious decades the writer-director Ira Siff—known to his fans as the falsetto soprano Vera Galupe-Borszkh—is closing down his all-male New York company (though it is rumored that Madame Vera may continue to make solo appearances). Its final production, **"Vera . . . Life of a Diva,"** a bio-epic of the incomparable La Dementia, will find the company's favorite characters—including African-American diva Kavatina Turner (Kyle Church Cheseborough) and Maestro Lorenzo Costalotta Denaro (Todd Sisley)—spoofing arias and scenes from "Tosca," "Manon," "Madama Butterfly," and other classics. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 5-6 at 8 and Oct. 7 at 7.)

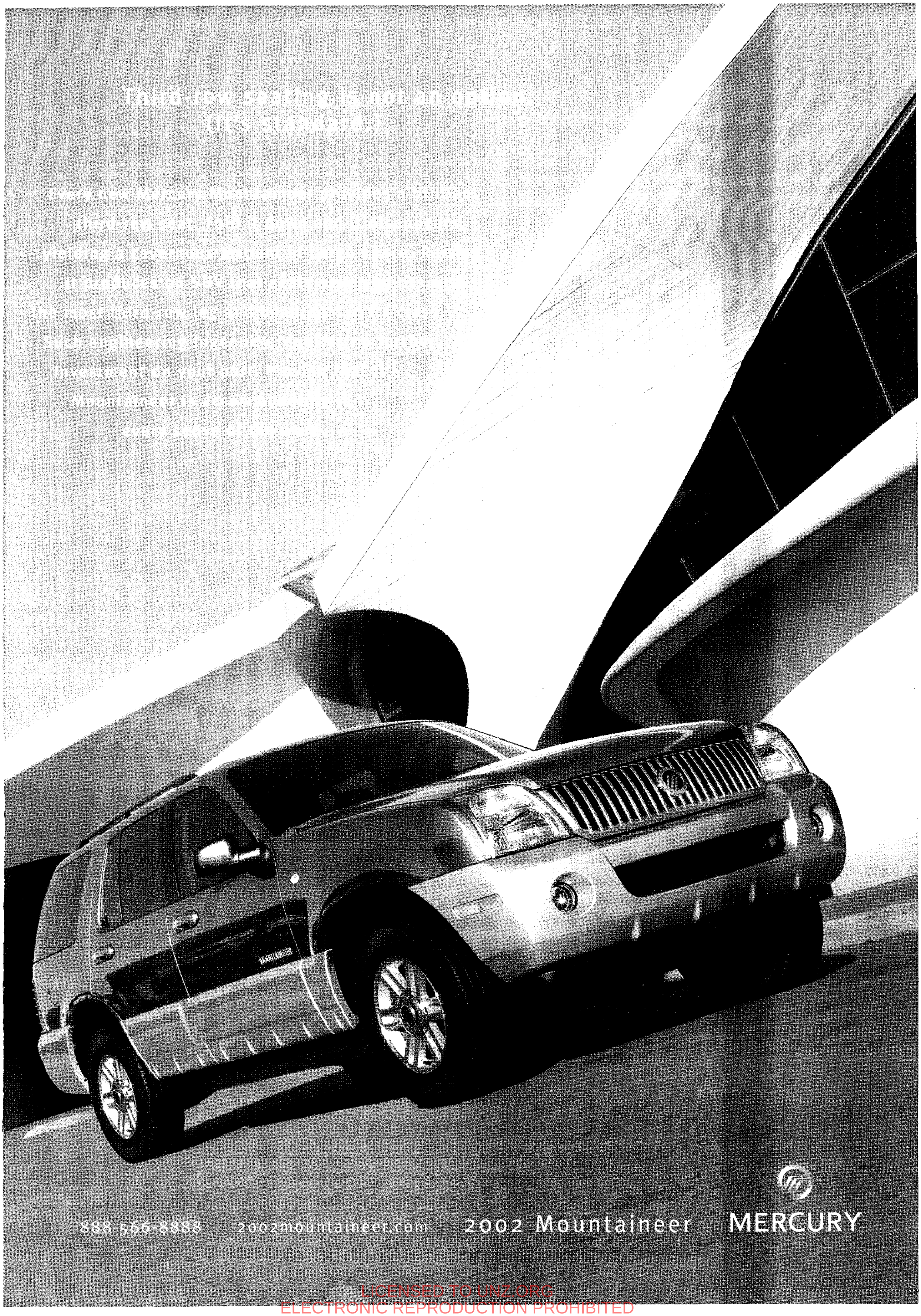
"LOGIC OF THE BIRDS"
A collaboration, loosely based on twelfth-century Persian mystical writings, between four noted Iranian-born artists—the visual artist Shirin Neshat, the composer Sussan Deyhim, the filmmaker Ghasem Ebrahimian, and the writer Shoja Azari. It combines film, music, and drama to illustrate the story of an Iranian woman (a role sung in Farsi by Deyhim) who attempts to break free from the social and political realities of her country. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. 5-6 at 8. Through Oct. 16. **Note:** The proceeds from the opening-night performance will be donated to the Kitchen's local fire department, Engine Company No. 3.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Oct. 4-6 at 8, and Oct. 9 at 7:30: André Previn's program runs the gamut of emotions, from the childlike innocence of Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" to the high drama of Dimitri Mitropoulos's string-orchestra arrangement of Beethoven's Quartet No. 14 in C-Sharp Minor. In between comes Britten's pastoral "Serenade" (with the tenor Anthony Dean Griffey and Philip Myers, the orchestra's principal hornist), a masterpiece of lyrical elegy. ♦ **Note:** In the first of an expanded series of pre-concert lectures and recitals, the orchestra's artistic administrator, Jeremy Geffen, discusses the music of Britten and the poetry of Blake, one hour before each concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500.)

BERLIN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
Carnegie Hall's official opening-night concert proceeds as scheduled, with Claudio Abbado (in his last season as artistic director) leading the orchestra in music by Mahler (four songs from "Des Knaben Wunderhorn," with the baritone Thomas Quasthoff) and Beethoven (the "Eroica" and the "Egmont" Overture). A portion of the concert's proceeds will be donated to the relief efforts of the World Trade Center tragedy. (Oct. 3 at 7.) ♦ Abbado and the B.P.O. return for an evening of Brahms (the First Piano Concerto, with Maurizio Pollini) and Beethoven (the Symphony No. 7 in A Major). (Oct. 5 at 8.) ♦ A final concert, featuring Beethoven's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies. (Oct. 6 at 8.) (247-7800.)

AZUOLIUKAS BOYS' CHOIR OF VILNIUS
The Lithuanian ensemble makes its first tour of the United States, presenting music by Rachmaninoff, Rutter, Bernstein (selections from "West Side Story"), and others. (Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St. 982-1335. Oct. 6 at 8.)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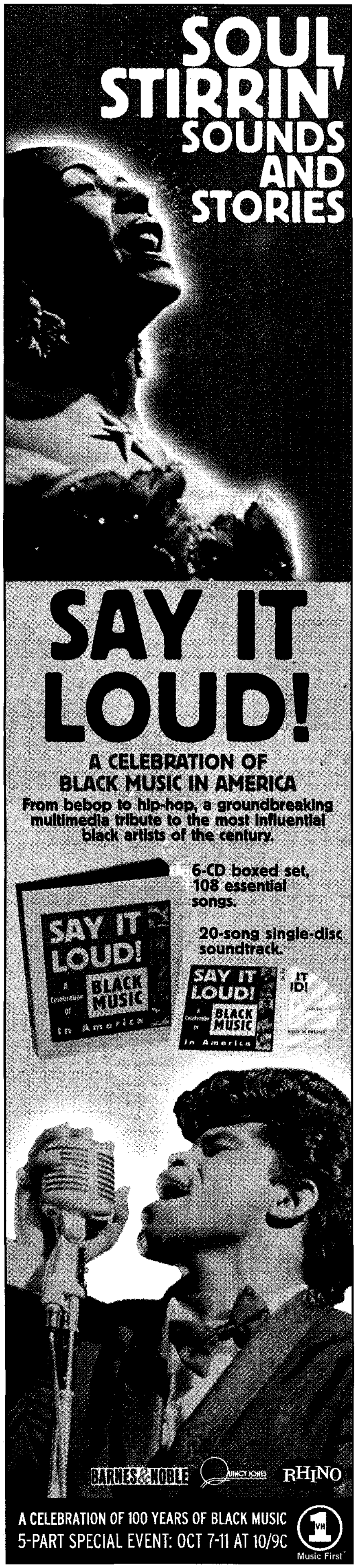
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CINCINNATI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem," written in 1961 to commemorate the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral (destroyed by German bombs), has always stirred debate. Most find its settings of the Mass for the Dead and of the pacifist poetry of Wilfred Owen deeply affecting; others (like Stravinsky, who listened to a recording with "Kleenex at the ready") have objected to its sentimental music and simplistic political message. James Conlon conducts the orchestra, the Cincinnati May Festival Chorus, and the American Boychoir in what promises to be an especially charged performance; the vocal soloists are Marina Shaguch, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, and Olaf Bär. (247-7800. Oct. 9 at 8.)

RECITALS

NOONDAY CONCERT SERIES
Trinity Church continues its calendar of lunchtime recitals. Oct. 4 at 1: The bass-baritone Kevin Deas and the pianist Mikail Eliasen offer works by Schubert, Fauré, Brubeck, and Ellington (excerpts from the "Sacred Concerts") and a group of spirituals. ♦ Oct. 8 at noon: A program of Bach and Schumann (the Fantasy in C Major), played by the pianist David Shimoni. (Broadway at Wall St. No tickets necessary.)

BARGEMUSIC
New music by John Zorn, the maverick arch-downtown composer, anchors this weekend's programs; the musicians include the soprano Julie Liston, the cellist Fred Sherry, the pianist Stephen Gosling, and the percussionist Tom Kolor. Oct. 4 and Oct. 6 at 7:30: The première of "Chimera Book I," along with music by Messiaen ("Île de Feu II") and Charles Wuorinen. ♦ Oct. 5 at 7:30 and Oct. 7 at 4: Soprano arias by Bach and music by Elliott Carter ("Enchanted Preludes") complement the première of "Chimera Book II." (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

MAURIZIO POLLINI
The pianist plays two Beethoven sonatas (including the "Apassionata") and Chopin's four Ballades. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 7 at 3.)

JUILLIARD PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE
Daniel Druckman (the renowned New York Philharmonic percussionist) leads his group in music by Mario Davidovsky, C. Bryan Rulon, Edward Bilous (the première of Part I of "The Black Madonna," a cantata with texts sung in Arabic, Catalan, Polish, and other languages). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Oct. 9 at 8. For information about tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

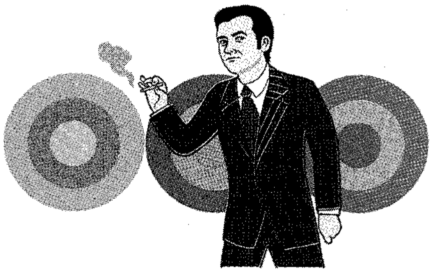
READINGS
Oct. 3 at 7:30: The Poetry Project brings together fifty local poets for a benefit reading of works written in response to the World Trade Center tragedy. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.) ♦ Oct. 4 at 7: By the poet Ned O'Gorman, from his new collection, "Five Seasons of Obsession." The composer Ned Rorem will provide the introduction. (The Lenox Hill Bookstore, 1018 Lexington Ave., between 72nd and 73rd Sts. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Oct. 7 at 2: By Major Jackson and Julia Kasdorf, from their poetry. (Wave Hill, 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. 718-549-3200.) ♦ Oct. 7 at 7: By Abraham Rodriguez, from his new novel, "The Buddha Book," and by Dalton Conley, from "Honky," his memoir about growing up in a housing project on the Lower East Side. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
Oct. 3 at 6: The critic Calvin Reid and the art historian John Zinsser discuss the state of the current art scene in New York City. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5488.) ♦ Oct. 6 at 2: Bill Twomey, a longtime history columnist for the *Bronx Times Reporter*, talks about the role of the Irish in that borough. (Throgs Neck Branch Library, 3025 Cross Bronx Expressway Extension, at Tremont Ave., the Bronx. For more information, call 718-792-2612.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Yeah, Baby!

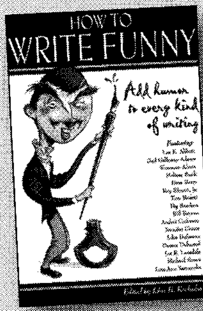
In **GROOVY BOB** (Faber & Faber), the recent biography of Robert Fraser, a flamboyant art dealer in nineteen-sixties London, Harriet Vyner describes Fraser's outsize personality and sartorial splendor in words that evoke the brief, vivid moment when London was truly swinging: "the sharp multicoloured suits, the drugs and the way-out language." Full of amusing accounts of Fraser's notorious ups and downs from such cultural superstars as Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney, and Bridget Riley, Vyner's bio pinpoints Fraser—a former King's African Rifles officer who may have had a fling with Idi Amin—as the epicenter of Swinging London, in an era in which the lines between pop and art were not so much blurred as erased.


MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

When Fraser wasn't jetting off to Marrakech with the Stones, selling Magrittes to McCartney, or getting busted for possession, he championed some of the best artists of the day. It was Fraser who recommended that Peter Blake, the British collagist, design the soon-to-be-iconic cover of "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." This image is recalled by the artist in **PETER BLAKE: ABOUT COLLAGE** (Washington), which also features work by Joseph Cornell, John Lennon, and Claes Oldenburg, who depicted towering lipstick cannisters sprouting from Piccadilly Circus.

As minimal as Blake's works were riotous, Bridget Riley's luminous op-art designs—oscillating black-and-white ripples, interlocking triangles that vibrate on the canvas—have become shorthand for the look of sixties London. **BRIDGET RILEY: RECONNAISSANCE** (Dia), the monograph that accompanied Riley's recent New York retrospective, proves that work shown by Fraser thirty-five years ago can still look futuristic.

—*Mark Rozzo*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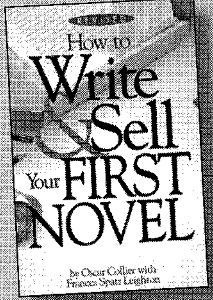
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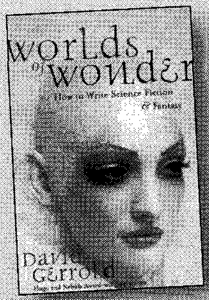
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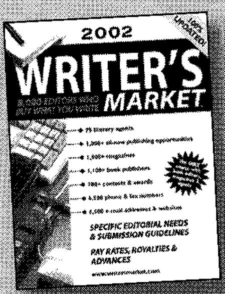
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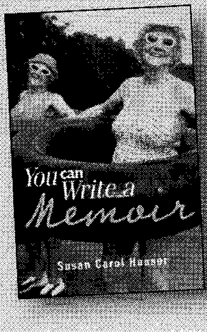
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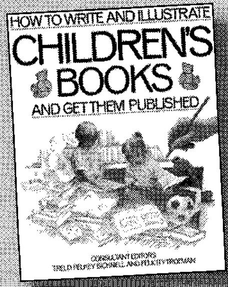
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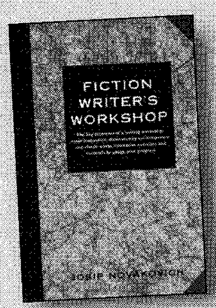
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MOVIES OPENING

CHOP SUEY
Bruce Weber directed this film about his obsessions, including Frances Faye, Diana Vreeland, and a teen-age wrestling star, Peter Johnson. Opening Oct. 5. (Film Forum.)

LA CIENAGA
Two large Argentinean families coexist uneasily while spending the summer together in this drama written and directed by Lucrecia Martel. In Spanish. Opening Oct. 3. (Film Forum.)

IRON MONKEY
A rerelease of a 1993 martial-arts movie, directed by Yuen Wo Ping, the action choreographer for "The Matrix" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." In Cantonese. Opening Oct. 5.

JOY RIDE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 5.

MAX KEEBLE'S BIG MOVE
A Disney comedy about a seventh grader who creates havoc when he thinks his family is moving to another town. Opening Oct. 5.

MULHOLLAND DRIVE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 8.

SERENDIPITY
Peter Chelsom directed this romantic drama set in New York. With Kate Beckinsale and John Cusack. Opening Oct. 5.

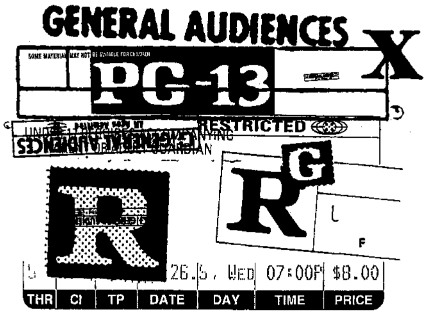
TRAINING DAY
Denzel Washington plays a corrupt Los Angeles narcotics officer who indoctrinates a rookie (Ethan Hawke) in this drama directed by Antoine Fuqua. Opening Oct. 5.

FILM NOTES

APOCALYPSE NOW REDUX
Francis Ford Coppola's steaming, misshapen epic, now twenty-two years old, is with us once more, and it feels madder and more necessary than ever. With the editorial support of Walter Murch, Coppola has revisited the scene of his movie and recut from the original dailies, adding, along the way, some forty-nine minutes of excised footage. This includes, you will be charmed to discover, more sex: a dinner party and postprandial seduction scene on a French plantation, and the dreamy, sorrowful coupling of soldiers and Playboy models in the cockpit of a grounded helicopter. Whether we need this stuff remains arguable, but it certainly thickens the surfeit of half-satisfied desires that were already boiling away inside the movie. For good measure, there is also our first sight of Brando in broad daylight, mocking the imprisoned Martin Sheen. The new print is ripe and lustrous, and the sound recording—of river whispers as much as of music—could have come straight from a hypnotist's handbook.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 8/6/01.) (Astor Plaza, Cinema I, Union Square, and Waverly.)

THE CURSE OF THE JADE SCORPION
Woody Allen's latest comedy, set in an auburn-colored and jazz-haunted past, looks good, but the picture feels attenuated, redundant, and trivial. Dressed in a fedora and a loosened tie, Allen plays a garrulous nineteen-forties insurance investigator (a sort of crotchety, self-pitying Edward G. Robinson). Helen Hunt is the newly hired office-efficiency expert (a Rosalind Russell type, except blond). They meet, hate each other, and engage in baroquely phrased period insults that allegedly hide their true attraction. You have to enjoy the movie (if you can) as a put-on, not as the romantic comedy it's intended to be.—*David Denby* (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE DEEP END
A heartfelt and beautifully made neo-noir thriller that takes its moods and colors from the turquoise blue of Lake Tahoe. A mother of three, Margaret (Tilda Swinton), discovers a dead body outside her family's lakeside home one morning. It is her teenage son's gay lover, a Reno club owner and lowlife, and Margaret sets about disposing of the corpse as if it were a particularly cumbersome household nuisance. The movie, which is beautifully shot by Giles Nuttgens, develops rhapsodic and fatalistic moods that hold you even when the story becomes improbable. Written and directed by the team of Scott McGehee and David Siegel.—*David Denby* (8/13/01) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas.)



DINNER RUSH
A modestly scaled independent film about a long, long evening of cooking, eating, intrigue, hustle, sex, and murder at a Tribeca trattoria. The movie, well directed by Bob Giraldi, is made up of many little vignettes, most of them incisively written by the team of Rick Shaughnessy and Brian Kalata. Danny Aiello plays the tough-old-pro owner who may give up the place to his son (Edoardo Ballerini), a brilliant chef who has turned the family restaurant into something very chic. With Kirk Acevedo as a compulsive gambler who works as a sous-chef, Sandra Bernhard as a food writer in a wig, and many others. The movie was shot at Gigino, an actual restaurant that Giraldi owns.—*D.D.* (10/1/01) (BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Union Square.)

DON'T SAY A WORD
Vicious jewel thieves kidnap a smart little girl; her father, a master psychiatrist (Michael Douglas), must wrest a certain bit of information that the thieves want from a young woman (Brittany Murphy) who may or may not be crazy. Meanwhile, the psychiatrist's wife (Famke Janssen) lies in bed with a broken leg and fights off the gang with her crutch. All these not quite fascinating activities take place in an oppressive, gray-blue Manhattan and culminate in a violent fight that goes on forever in the semi-darkness of a graveyard. The movie's gravity is inane; nothing here works. Directed by Gary Fleder.—*D.D.* (Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia I and II, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

THE FRENCH CONNECTION
A hugely successful 1971 thriller that zaps the audience with noise, speed, and brutality. It's certainly exciting, but that excitement isn't necessarily a pleasure. The ominous music keeps tightening the screws and heating things up; the movie proceeds through chases, pistol-whippings, slashings, murders, snipings, and more chases for close to two hours. This is what's meant to give you a charge. There are no good guys. Gene Hackman plays the lowlife police detective who cracks the case; he's porkpie-hatted and lewd and boorish. William Friedkin directed.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; Oct. 2-4.)

GHOST WORLD
Two strip-mall Savonarolas, Enid (Thora Birch) and Rebecca (Scarlett Johansson), gaze with disgust at the fallen world around them. Terry Zwigoff's movie is based on Daniel Clowes's cartoon novel, which he and Clowes adapted. For a while, "Ghost World" seems to be a new type of dyspeptic comedy, acid yet tender. Zwigoff's sense of visual elegance gives clarity and snap to material that might have fallen into a crabby nowheresville. But the movie loses its cool. It zeros in on Enid's unhappiness, and she begins to seem like a typical teen-ager, one who makes jokes to cover her pain and who needs to grow up. See it for Birch's hostile stare and Johansson's devastating monotone.—*D.D.* (8/6/01) (Angelika Film Center, Battery Park 16, Empire 25, 59th Street East Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

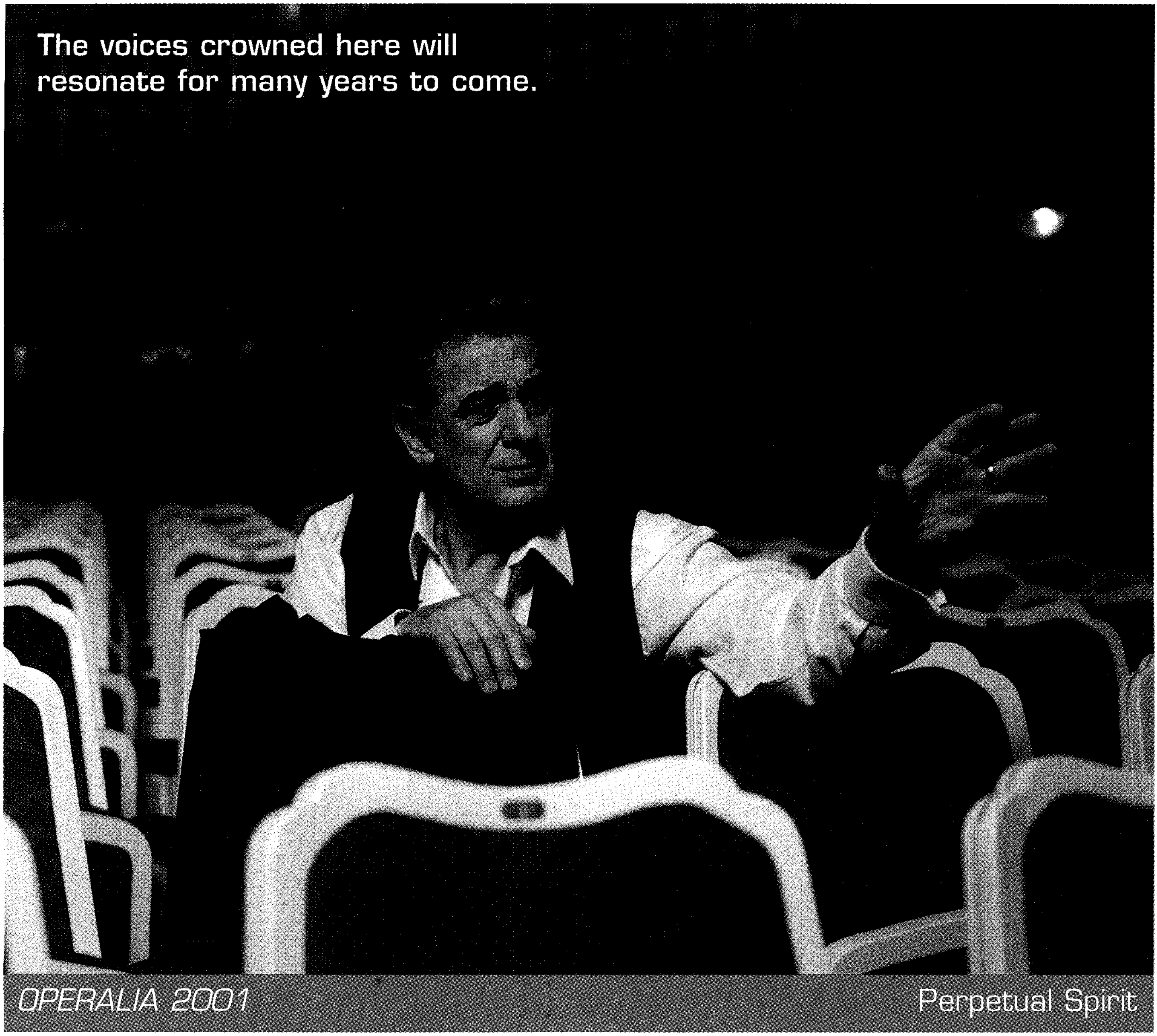
GO TIGERS!
You know you have arrived in a place where high-school football is taken seriously when the dedication of the team exceeds that of the marching band. Massillon, Ohio, is one such town, a mostly blue-collar community of thirty-three thousand, where boys are held back in the eighth grade so they will have more time to become bigger and stronger. The filmmaker Ken Carlson documents the season of the local team, the Tigers, and follows the fates of three players: the black defensive end who sees football as his ticket out, and the white quarterback and linebacker who sense that senior year is their reward, not their staging ground. Carlson gets at the way the adults and the teens feed off each other, making the game into a test of the town's character. He also catches the fever himself: the second half of the movie plays like a highlight reel.—*Michael Agger* (Quad Cinema.)

JAY AND SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK
Kevin Smith sums up his career thus far in a ragtag affair that's profane, silly, and likable. Jay (Jason Mewes) and Silent Bob (Smith himself), leave their turf outside a Quick Stop convenience store in Leonardo, New Jersey, and head for Hollywood. Jay, who looks like a stoned Viking, is a ranter—obscene, empty-brained, sublimely confident with women yet scoreless as a eunuch. Silent Bob, his patsy and fool, plays off Jay's tirades with yearning eyes. When the boys arrive in Los Angeles, they run into current and former stars of the independent cinema, including Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, who take turns dumping on one another's careers. With Chris Rock, Jason Biggs, Mark Hamill, and many others in cameo appearances.—*D.D.* (9/3/01) (Battery Park 16, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

JEEPERS CREEPERS
Produced by Francis Ford Coppola and directed by Victor Salva, this road-trip horror film (two siblings are relentlessly pursued by a fanged demon) develops into an effective and sinister ride. Lushly photographed, with a surprising number of jolts and surprises, it skirts the clichés of most fright entertainment with roller-coaster pacing and some inspired mordant wit.—*Bruce Diones* (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and Orpheum VII.)

L.I.E.
A delinquent kid (Paul Franklin Dano) first robs and then befriends a middle-aged ex-marine (Brian Cox), who knows a lucky chance when he sees one. As movie subjects go, pedophilia is volatile to the point of explosive, and Michael Cuesta has done well to hold his nerve and forge something so clever and careful. If anything, the cleverness cuts too deep. Cuesta's desire for tolerance is so pronounced, and Cox's skill is so generous and engaging, that, if you don't watch out, you can end up being seduced by the same strategic charm that ensnares the boy. The picture is suavely shot and never less than disturbing. Cuesta falters only when the comedy of sly, vicious seduction recedes to make way for a solid event—a guy keeling over with a heart attack, say, in the middle of a restaurant. But this is Cox's film, by a mile; as a good Shakespearean, he knows how to flood villainy with dramatic life. What do you do with a monster who dares you not to like him?—*A.L.* (9/10/01) (Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

LISA PICARD IS FAMOUS
Two unemployed actors came up with the canny idea of starring in a mock documentary about two unemployed actors starring in a documentary about their search for success. The actors, Laura Kirk and Nat DeWolf, also wrote the script, and the film's director, Griffin Dunne, plays a director in the film. Instead of another insider diatribe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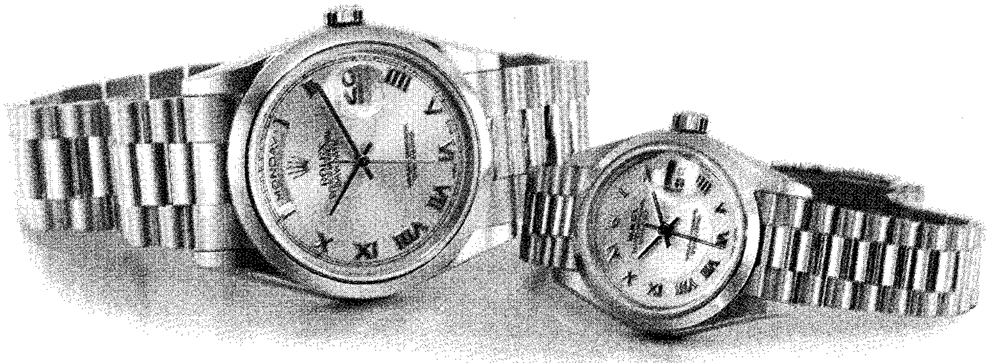

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about the players and poseurs of Hollywood, we are given the other side: a deftly shaped sendup of insecurity and ambition. Even so, the filmmakers are smart enough and connected enough—Mira Sorvino produced—to sprinkle their tale of wannabes with real-life celebrities (Sandra Bullock and Spike Lee, among others) doling out tongue-in-cheek career advice. Although Kirk and DeWolf's satirical script occasionally misfires, their film has a biting charm.—*B.D.* (Chelsea West, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

Despite its peculiar overtones of humor, this 1955 picture is one of the most frightening movies ever made. Robert Mitchum is the murderous, sex-obsessed, hymn-singing soul-saver with hypnotic powers, and his terrified new wife (Shelley Winters), who has a boy and a little girl from an earlier marriage, becomes his fervent disciple. The adaptation of Davis Grubb's novel was James Agee's last film work, and this shadowy horror fable was the first and only movie directed by Charles Laughton; it was a total financial disaster, and he never got a chance to direct again.—*P.K.* (New York Film Festival; Oct. 3.)

O

This transposition of "Othello" to a Southern prep school, with Mekhi Phifer as a black star basketball player, Julia Stiles as his white girlfriend, and Josh Hartnett as a jealous white rival, was held from distribution following the shootings at Columbine, but there was probably no need for caution, since the movie is sincere, nonexploitative, and heartfelt, and has no resemblance to any of the school shootings. Phifer's performance develops some tragic power, but Hartnett's Iago figure seems merely improbable. The movie is a decent try, but the attempts to stay close to Shakespeare's plot and to say something about American racism make for a complicated and confused way of telling a story that should have been straightforward. Directed by Tim Blake Nelson, sensitively, but without sensuality or excitement.—*D.D.* (Battery Park 16, Coronet Cinemas, East 85th Street, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE OTHERS

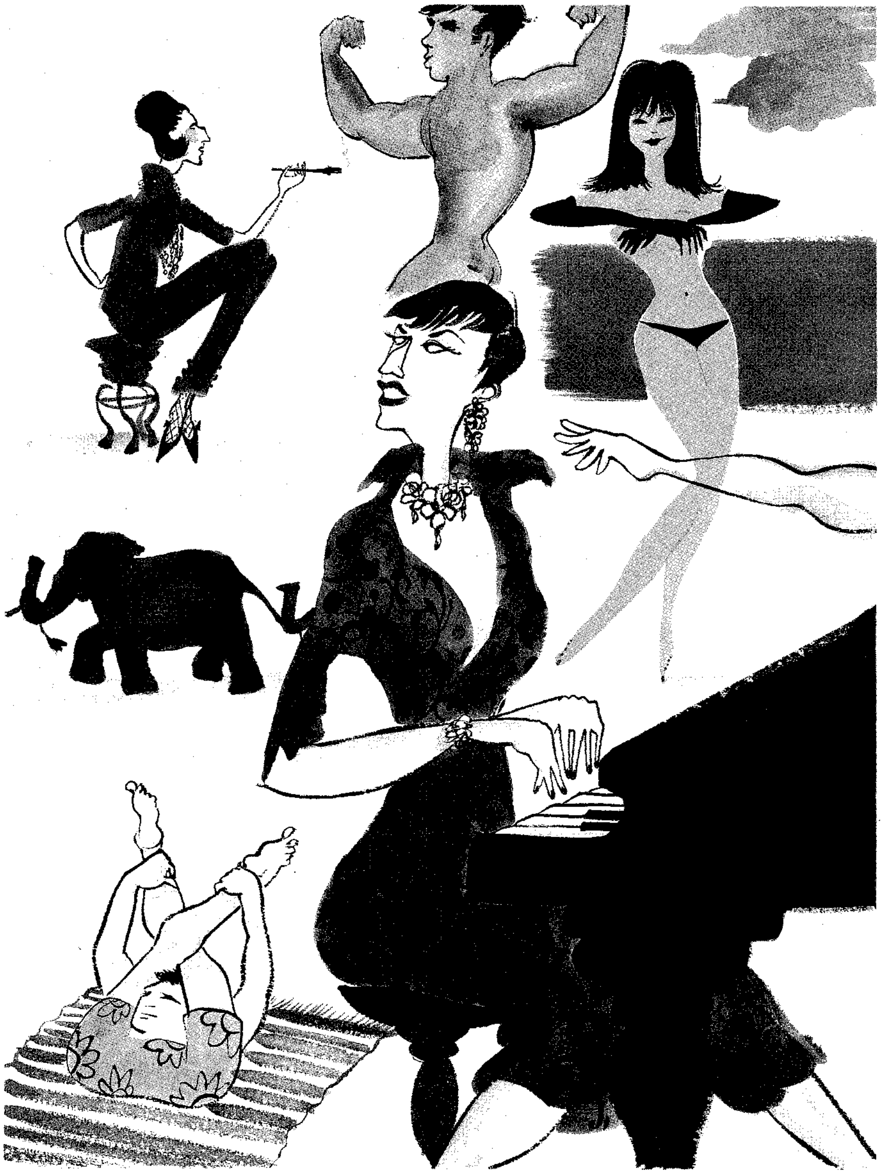
Nicole Kidman plays an upper-class Englishwoman living in a big house on Jersey at the end of the Second World War. Her husband is off fighting, and her two small children are so sensitive to light that the curtains must always be drawn and anyone passing from room to room must shut one door before opening the next. The electricity is out, and the house is covered in fog. One rather misses a beast howling on the moors or a madwoman in the attic, but there are voices, many voices, and the servants make creepy remarks. The Spanish director Alejandro Amenábar works by suggestion much of the time: he favors ambiguity rather than outright horrors, and the sepulchral gray light of the house and grounds can be elegant. But the movie becomes monotonous; it's like a sluggish computer game in which movement is limited to one room at a time.—*D.D.* (8/13/01) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

OUR LADY OF THE ASSASSINS

In Barbet Schroeder's new movie, a Colombian writer returns to his native Medellín to mourn his lost youth and, while he's at it, pick up a new one. Schroeder has made some spicy pictures in his time, but this one feels lacklustre by comparison, and the two main performers—Anderson Ballesteros as the hustler and German Jaramillo as his aging mentor—tend to drift through their scenes, trying not to notice the hellfire around them. Whether they are genuinely ground down by the woes of the world or simply exhausted by years of casual sex is hard to work out; to be fair, few directors could make a film about moral anesthesia without sinking into glumness, and Schroeder does a pretty good job of insuring that no one in the audience will book a Colombian vacation in the near future. In Spanish.—*A.L.* (9/10/01) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE QUIET ONE

Sidney Meyers' moving and eloquent 1949 semi-documentary feature, with narration and dialogue by James Agee, centers on Danny, a young Harlem boy classically alienated from both his city and his family. Just as Danny learns lessons that, in Agee's words, no one could teach him, the detailed portrayal of the movie's urban landscape brings home profound nonverbal messages. The boy's vision is expressed through Meyers' camera, which roams the streets at Danny's eye level, picking out the characters and architecture that affect him—doting parents, a raunchy movie theatre, laughing friends, trolley cars on their way downtown. The images are within his physical reach; their content is beyond his existential grasp.—*Michael Sragow* (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 7.)



Opening October 5, Bruce Weber's "Chop Suey."

RUBEN TOLEDO

RAT RACE

The director Jerry Zucker gathers together a group of comic actors, including Whoopi Goldberg, Jon Lovitz, and John Cleese, for this sporadically zany comedy about a cross-country race for two million dollars. Some of Zucker's elaborate stunts are inspired, and the sight gags have the pleasing obviousness of his earlier work. The jokes tend to hang around waiting for a laugh, but the film builds enough momentum for a proper goofball finish.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 16, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

ROCK STAR

Mark Wahlberg is Chris, a well-brought-up Pittsburgh boy who repairs copy machines during the day and tarts himself up at night as the lead singer in Blood Pollution, a tribute band devoted to the implacably mediocre Brit kings of heavy metal, Steel Dragon. When the lead singer of Steel Dragon gets kicked out, Chris steps in as his replacement. The movie is a sardonic look at the mechanics of the rock world: we get the clear idea that in this kind of high-schlock touring band no difference exists between the original and the copy. The details of Chris's rise are enjoyable, but the picture turns into a rather obvious morality tale. With Jennifer Aniston as his shrewd girlfriend, who inserts a nipple ring into his chest with great delicacy.—*D.D.* (9/17/01) (Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

SEXY BEAST

A tale of expatriate Cockneys, dry-roasted by the Spanish sun and determined to get England off their backs. Gal (Ray Winstone), once a crook, and his wife, Deedee (Amanda Redman), once a porno star, have retired to the Costa del Sol; now they are tracked down by an old acquaintance, Don (Ben Kingsley), who invites Gal back home for one last crime. Jonathan Glazer, the young British director making his début feature, turns the first half of the picture into a cool study of hotheads, saturated with creative cursing; the second half, which finds Gal returning to London, stumbles and slides into the grim traditions of gangsterland. But the movie needs to be seen for its clean compositions, its sure touch of fantasy, and, above all, for the forbidding presence of Kingsley—the prince of darkness, lightly disguised as a human being.—*A.L.* (6/18 & 25/01) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.)

TOGETHER
Lukas Moodysson's exemplary comedy, one part distressing to two parts delectable, is set in a hippie commune in the mid-nineteen-seventies—in Sweden, no less, where the hippie ethic was an article of faith. Within minutes, we know not only where we are but whom we are dealing with; as a director, Moodysson is the perfect host, calmly introducing us, without the trace of a sneer, to a broad selection of trolls and fruitcakes. What follows is a dance of desire, as men, women, and even children pair off with one another; under it all, like a bass note, sounds the story of Elisabeth (Lisa Lindgren) and her drunken husband, Rolf (Michael Nyqvist), strangers to this utopian colony, who finally find refuge, and a kind of reconciliation, in its absurd dreams. That is Moodysson's great trick: to blow hot and cold, allowing us both to laugh at these bearded types and to respect, even envy, their frazzled companionship. With the excellent Emma Samuelsson as the warring couple's daughter, and with the help of Abba—what did you expect?—on the soundtrack. In Swedish.—*A.L.* (8/20 & 27/01) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ZOOLANDER
Ben Stiller's comedy (he wrote, directed, and stars) is at best intermittently funny. He plays an empty-headed male model, and Owen Wilson is his stoned surf-boy rival. In their scenes together they generate a goofy comic energy, like the two most demented kids on the playground. Otherwise, the jokes are reheated (let this be the end of latte humor) and the scenes padded and overlong. The big joke—that fashion designers have formed a secret society to protect their sweatshop labor sources—seems severely misguided. Shots of the New York skyline were edited at the last minute; a better idea would have been to nix the cavalier references to slavery.—*M.A.* (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinemas 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

AMERICAN PIE 2
Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Union Square.

BAND OF OUTSIDERS
Film Forum.

THE CLOSET
Angelika Film Center, East 86th Street Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Murray Hill Cinemas, and State.

HARDBALL
Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.

HEARTS IN ATLANTIS
Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.

LIAM
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LIFE AND DEBT
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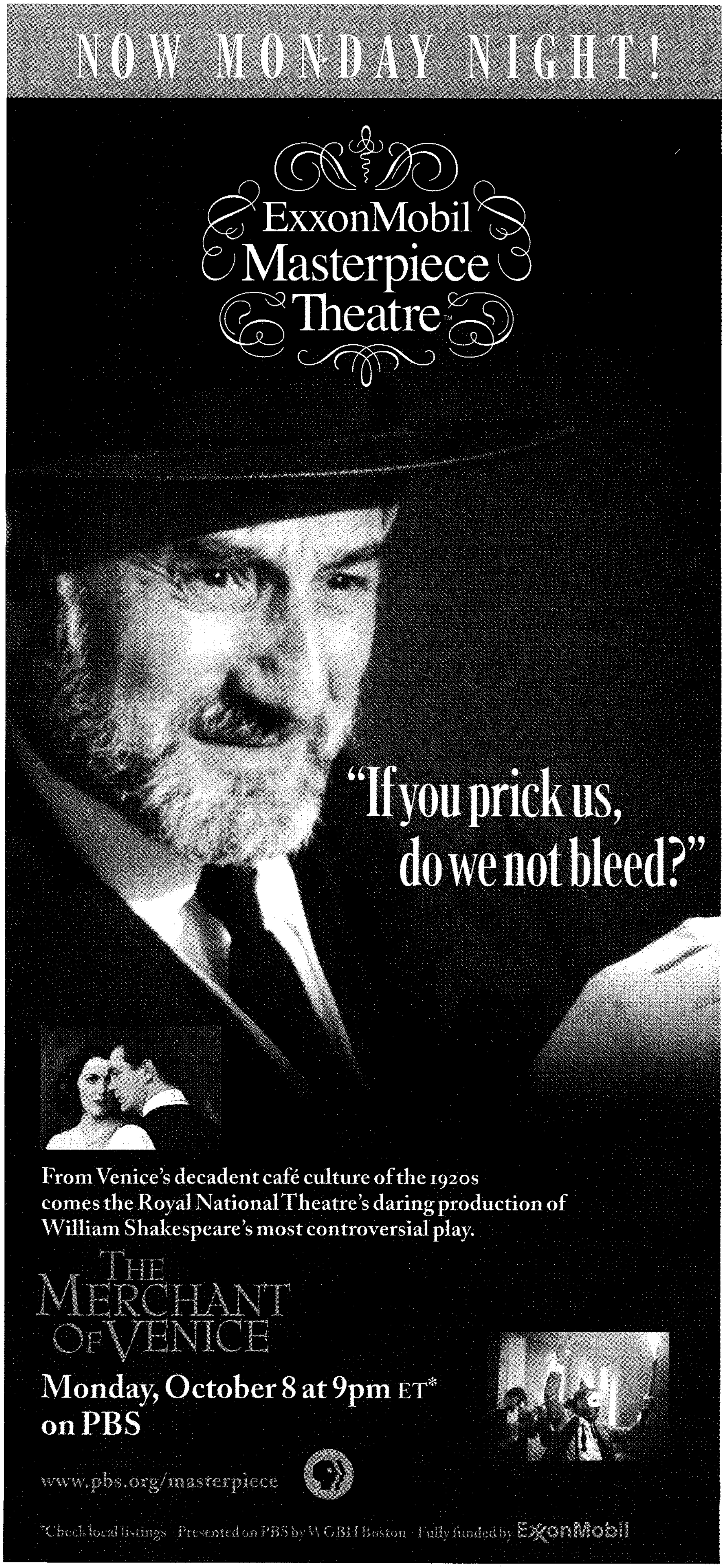
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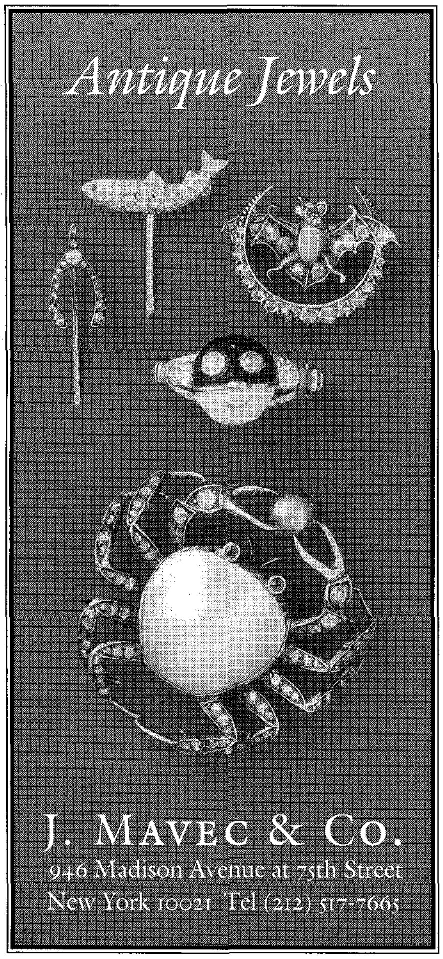
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THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St. (945-3418).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600).
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A Catherine Breillat retrospective. All films are in French. Oct. 6 at 2: "A Real Young Girl" (1976). ♦ Oct. 6 at 4: "Tapage Nocturne" (1979). ♦ Oct. 6 at 6:30: "36 Fillette" (1987). ♦ Oct. 7 at 2: "Dirty Like an Angel" (1991). ♦ Oct. 7 at 4: "Perfect Love!" (1996). ♦ Oct. 7 at 6:30: "Romance" (1999). Ms. Breillat will introduce this screening.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—Oct. 6-7: A tribute to Richard Schwarz, proprietor of the Thalia Theatre. Oct. 6 at 3: "The Red Balloon" (1956, Albert Lamorisse; in French) and "The Fireman" (1916, Charlie Chaplin). ♦ Oct. 6 at 4:15: "8½" (1963, Federico Fellini). ♦ Oct. 7 at 4:30: "The Quiet One" (†). ♦ Oct. 7 at 6 and 8: "Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (777-3456)—Oct. 3 at 4:30 and 9:30: "Jacked" (2001, Timothy Wayne Folsome). ♦ Oct. 4 at 6:30, 8, and 9:30: "Following" (1998, Christopher Nolan). ♦ Recent Australian films. Oct. 6 at 2 and 8: "Oscar and Lucinda" (1997, Gillian Armstrong). ♦ Oct. 6 at 4:30 and Oct. 7 at 2, 4, and 9:40: "Looking for Alibrandi" (1999, Kate Woods). ♦ Oct. 7 at 7: "Parklands" (1996, Kathryn Millard). ♦ Oct. 8 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Sum of Us" (1994, Kevin Dowling and Geoff Burton). ♦ Oct. 9 at 6 and 9:30: "One Night the Moon" (2001, Rachel Perkins).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Oct. 2-4 at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10: "The French Connection" (†). ♦ Through Oct. 18: A tribute to Melina Mercouri, the Greek actress and wife of the director Jules Dassin. Oct. 5-8 at 3:45 and 7:45 and Oct. 9 at 3:45: "Never on Sunday" (1960, Dassin; in English and Greek). ♦ Oct. 5-8 at 1:30, 5:30, and 9:30 and Oct. 9 at 1:30 and 5:30: "Topkapi" (1964, Dassin). ♦ Oct. 9 at 8: An evening with Jules Dassin.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Through Oct. 30: "French Classics in Black & White." Oct. 9 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Eyes Without a Face" (1959, Georges Franju).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Oct. 4 at 6 and Oct. 5 at 2: "A 19-Year-Old's Map" (1980, Mitsuo Yanagimachi; in Japanese). ♦ Through Oct. 15: a Béla Tarr retrospective. All films are in Hungarian. Oct. 5 at 6: "Werckmeister Harmonies" (2000). ♦ Oct. 6 at 1: "Sátántangó" (1994). ♦ Oct. 7 at 2: "Family Nest" (1978). ♦ Oct. 7 at 5: "The Outsider" (1981). ♦ Oct. 8 at 2: "Journey on the Plain" (1995). ♦ Oct. 8 at 5: "Damnation" (1987). ♦ Oct. 9 at 2:30: "Almanac of Fall" (1985). ♦ Oct. 9 at 6: "Macbeth" (1982).

THE MUSEUM OF TELEVISION & RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Oct. 31: Famous "I Love Lucy" episodes. Tuesdays through Sundays at 12:15. ♦ Through Nov. 2: Selected short films from "Saturday Night Live." Thursdays and Fridays at 6:30 and Saturdays and Sundays at 4.

THE NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL
Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5050)—Oct. 3 at 6 and Oct. 4 at 9:15: "Time Out" (2001, Laurent Cantet; in French). ♦ Oct. 3 at 9:15: "The Night of the Hunter" (†). ♦ Oct. 4 at 6: "Italian for Beginners" (2001, Lone Scherfig; in Danish and Italian). ♦ Oct. 5 at 6 and Oct. 6 at midnight: "The Royal Tenenbaums" (2001, Wes Anderson). ♦ Oct. 5 at 9:15 and Oct. 7 at 5: "The Lady and the Duke" (2001, Eric Rohmer; in French). ♦ Oct. 6 at 2 and Oct. 8 at 6: "Silence . . . We're Rolling" (2001, Youssef Chahine). ♦ Oct. 6 at 5 and Oct. 7 at 8:30: "Y Tu Mama Tambien" (2001, Alfonso Cuarón; in Spanish). ♦ Oct. 6 at 8 and Oct. 7 at 1:30: "Mulholland Drive" (2001, David Lynch). ♦ Oct. 8 at 9 and Oct. 9 at 6: "Fat Girl" (2001, Catherine Breillat; in French). ♦ Oct. 9 at 9: "Baran" (2001, Majid Majidi; in Farsi).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Oct. 12: "The Outsider Looking In: The Films of Leonardo Favio." A ten-film retrospective of the career of the Argentinean actor, singer, and director. All films are in Spanish. Oct. 3 at 4 and 7:30 and Oct. 4 at 5:30 and 9:15: "The Boss" (1958, Fernando Ayala). ♦ Oct. 3 at 5:50 and 9:20 and Oct. 4 at 4 and 7:30: "The Romance of Aniceto and Francisca" (1967, Favio). ♦ Oct. 5 at 4 and 7:30: "Hand in the Trap" (1961, Leopoldo Torre Nilsson). ♦ Oct. 5 at 5:50 and 9:20 and Oct. 7 at 1: "The Employee" (1968, Favio). ♦ Oct. 7 at 3, Oct. 8 at 4 and 8:15, and Oct. 9 at 6:15: "Juan Moreira" (1973, Favio). ♦ Oct. 7 at 5:10, Oct. 8 at 6:15, and Oct. 9 at 4:15: "Nazareno Cruz and the Wolf" (1974, Favio). ♦ Oct. 7 at 7:10: "Dream, Dream" (1976, Favio). ♦ Oct. 7 at 9: "Gatica" (1993, Favio). ♦ Oct. 9 at 8:30: "Perón, a Symphony of Feeling" (1999, Favio). ♦ Special presentation. Oct. 6 at 12, 3, 6, 9, and midnight: "Blue Wild Angel: Jimi Hendrix Live at the Isle of Wight" (2001, Murray Lerner).

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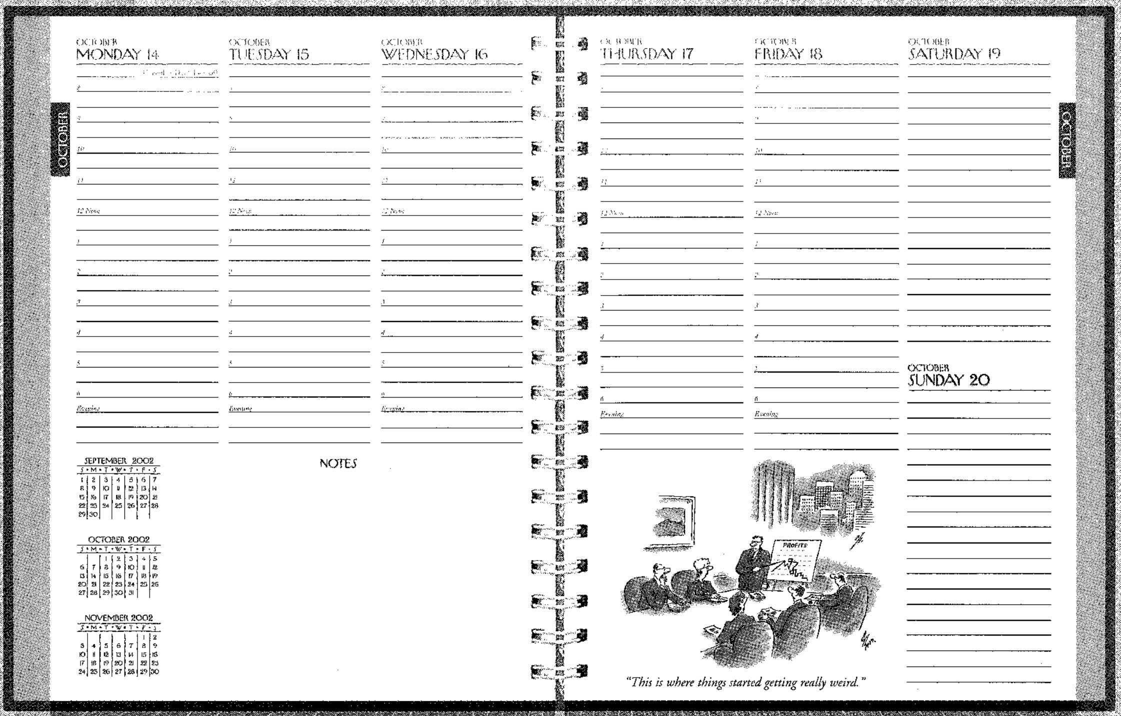
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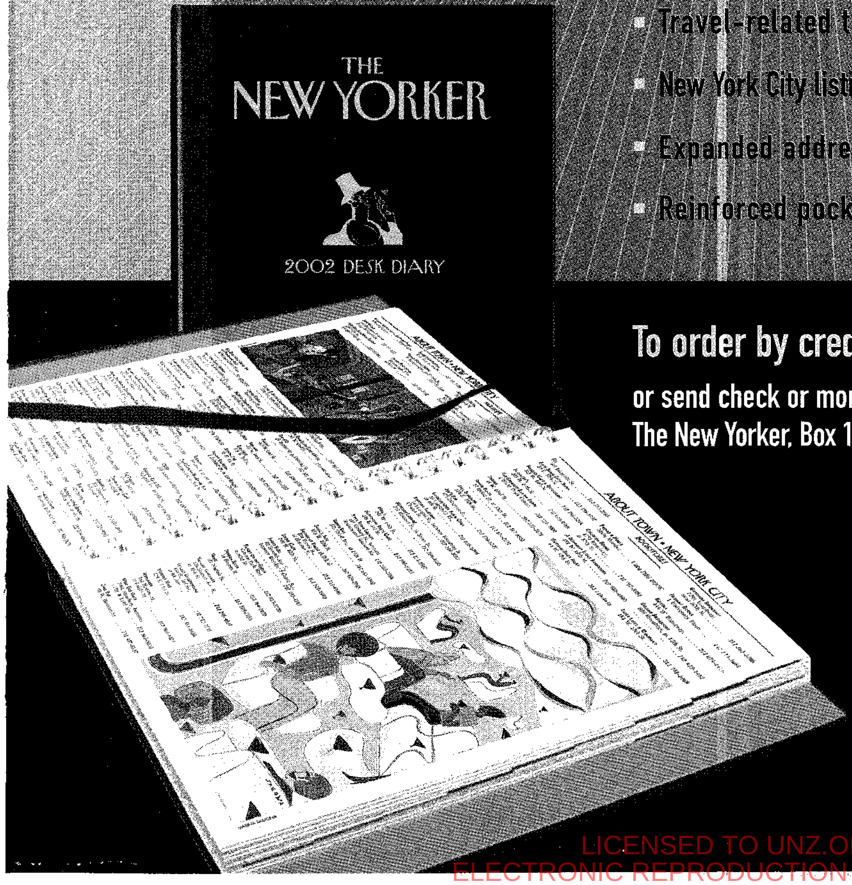
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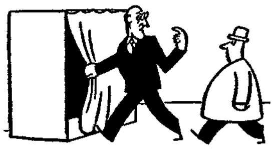
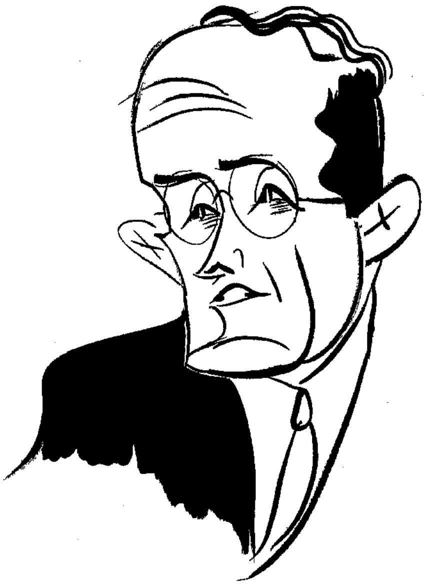


On September 11th, when New York staggered and seemed about to fall, its Mayor rose from the ashes to catch and steady it. On that day, and the next, and the next, and right through the second week, Rudolph Giuliani was exactly the leader the city needed. He was unstintingly *there*—at the scene, so close that he was nearly killed when the first tower collapsed. His demeanor—calm, frank, patient, tender, egoless, competent—was, as carried to the city and the world through the intimacy of television, profoundly reassuring. He displayed all the right emotions, and he displayed them in just the right way, often by keeping them in check. "City fathers" is an old-fashioned term, seldom used anymore except with a hint of derision. But Giuliani, during this terrible time, has truly been the city's father—strong and kind, firm and comforting.

In recent days, though, Giuliani's perfect pitch has begun to fail him. He had urged his fellow-citizens to return, in defiance of terror, to their civic pursuits and pleasures. He set the example by way of his own cultural passions: at the opera and the ballparks, audience and crowd respectively cheered their hearts out for him. Yet he was oddly churlish about the noblest civic pursuit of all. "People decide on their own if they want to vote or don't want to vote," he grumbled last Monday, on the eve of the primary election for city offices, including his own—the very election that had been abruptly postponed on account of the catastrophe. "Most experts think there will be a record low turnout at the polls today, perhaps as few as 350,000," *Newsday* reported the next morning. In the event, more than twice that number cast ballots—a respectable showing, by the degraded standards of recent primaries.

By then, the Mayor's circle had already begun to maneuver for a third consecutive term, which is forbidden under an amendment to the City Charter—New York's constitution—that was adopted by popular referendum in 1993, and affirmed, again by referendum, in 1996. Virtually the entire civic and political establishment opposed it, with a handful of exceptions—most notably Rudolph Giuliani.


Rudolph Giuliani

Even so, it is only natural that the Mayor should now wish for another four years. He has never been especially loath to regard himself as indispensable; and suddenly there are millions who share that opinion, or seem to. A Marist survey shows that ninety-one per cent of the public approves of Giuliani's "handling," as the question put it, of the terrorist attack; and exit polls on the day of the rescheduled primary suggested that his reëlection, if it were possible, would be a foregone conclusion. The truth is that if the Mayor could be retained in office by waving a magic wand the line of wavers would stretch all the way to Albany. But, to actually do it, a wand would not suffice. Something more like a nail-studded club would be required.

New York's election laws offer several routes to the destination, all of them fraught with obstacles (and all of them subject to challenge in the courts). Under the least implausible scenario, the city's Conservative Party—a grouping that, until last week, backed term limits with almost as much fervor as it had tried to frustrate Giuliani's hopes for higher office—would shunt its current mayoral candidate off to run for a judicial post. Meanwhile, the State Legislature would hastily pass a bill voiding the term-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

limits provision of the City Charter.

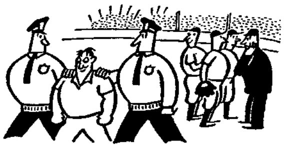
It ought to go without saying that a rush to change the fundamental laws governing elections—and to do so not only in the middle of a campaign but after the voting has already begun, solely for the sake of retaining a leader of supposedly irreplaceable strength—is more than a little redolent of a banana republic. It smacks of Bonapartism, of *caudillismo*. The machinations necessary to bring it about would reek of hypocrisy and bad faith. The very idea of it infantilizes the electorate—the dark side of Rudy's fatherhood. (And it might even be unpopular; the same Marist poll that gave Giuliani his ninety-one per cent also showed that the public, by a twenty-four-point margin, did not want to change the law in order to open his path to another term.)

Last Wednesday, the Mayor retreated a bit. He issued an ultimatum disguised as a deal. If all three of the major candidates to replace him—Michael Bloomberg, who had just won the Republican nomination outright, and Mark Green and Fernando Ferrer, who will face each other in a runoff for the Democratic nomination on October 11th—would agree to a three-month extension of his present term, then he would forgo the nailed club. Bloomberg and Green quickly said yes; a few hours later, Ferrer said no. Such an arrangement would be, as they say, highly irregular; still, there are rational arguments for it. "These unique circumstances," Green's spokesman explained, "justify such a nonpartisan, nontraditional approach to encourage unity and planning." But everyone knows that the real justification is that the deal would appease the Mayor, coaxing him to resist his instinct to spend the rest of his term belittling the candidates, undermining his eventual successor, and wreaking havoc on the democratic process itself.

At the weekend, it was unclear what Giuliani would do next. Amid the sadnesses of the moment, the spectacle of the Mayor's thrashings does not loom large. Yet sad it is. There is hardly a New Yorker who, at some point during the last three weeks, has not felt love—the word is not too strong—for Rudy Giuliani. It takes nothing away from his extraordinary performance to note that the emotion that has flowed toward him has had sources outside himself. In cheering Rudy, we have also been cheering our city, and our firefighters and our cops and our rescue workers. And we have been cheering ourselves, or a familiar idealization of ourselves: the indomitable city dweller, the tough guy with a heart of gold. Giuliani became the medium for the inchoate feelings of pride and defiance and solidarity that swept over us all, including many who had never had much use for him before, precisely because his political ambition was not at stake. Because he was a lame duck, he was a soaring eagle. It would be a shame if he dirtied his wings.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

INGENUITY DEPT.
THE GAME OR THE BAG



Time to get back to normal: ride the No. 4 train up to the Bronx, tallboy in hand, and speedwalk along River Avenue, past the scalpers and the National Guardsmen, to catch a little Yankee baseball.

This was last week, the Yankees' first home stand since the World Trade Center attacks. At Gate 7, the ticket-takers were turning away fans who were carrying any kind of bag—briefcases, backpacks, duffels. "Go to Gate 4," they said.

At Gate 4, the ticket-takers said, "Go to 4A." At Gate 4A, they said, through megaphones, "No bags or backpacks. No bags or backpacks." Men with bags surged toward the gate, like refugees, and directed halfhearted interrogations at a crew of stadium officials and security guards.

"What do you mean, no bags?"

"Sir, that bag is not getting into this stadium."

"Can we check our bags?"

"Nope."

"Can't you just search my bag?"

"No bags."

A guard stepped forward to clarify the policy: "Females are allowed one primary bag." Males, no bags whatsoever. Men with bags could exchange their tickets for tickets to a future game.

"This is ludicrous!" one man said.

"What if I just give my bag to a woman?" another said. The crew regarded him wearily.

It was dawning on the men with bags that they had a choice: the game or the bag. So a number of them retreated from the gate and crouched over their belongings, transferring phones, files, notebooks, and envelopes to their pockets. They then tossed their empty bags into a large garbage bin. Soon, the bin was overflowing with backpacks and messenger bags and canvas briefcases.

A security guard explained that the policy was new, although he wasn't sure whose policy it was. "I was in Israel for a while," he said. "This is the norm there." He reported that it was not something that one got used to. He also said that until two weeks ago he had been a proofreader for Oppenheimer Funds. His office had been destroyed in the Trade Center collapse. "Now I'm doing this," he said. Another guard walked up and scolded him for talking to a man with a notebook: "Do not comment."

The repeated call, over the megaphones, of "No bags or backpacks, no bags or backpacks" was beginning to sound like a "Beer here!" for a new New York.

A family approached the gate: mother, father, little boy, baby in a stroller. The mother carried a red handbag and a blue lunchbox. The father, a trim man in a gray suit, carried a handsome leather briefcase.

"Sir, that briefcase can't come in the stadium," an official said.

"Can't you just look at it?" the father asked.

"No. But you can put it back in your car."

"But we didn't drive here. We came

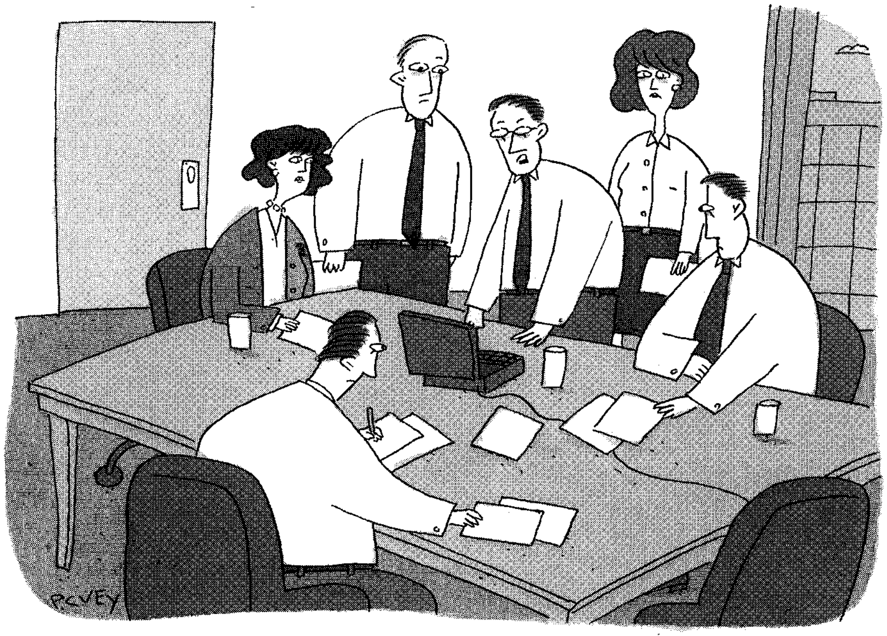
from the city." The little boy, who looked to be about four, started to cry.

The stadium official pulled them aside. "Sir, let me explain something to you," he began. In a lowered voice, he told the man to go away, stash the briefcase in the stroller, and then come back in five minutes. As the family walked off, the official called out, in a voice that was a bit louder than seemed necessary, "O.K., so put the bag in the car!" The man nodded back, a little nervous: he did not look like a guy accustomed to bending the rules.

Five minutes later, they came back—very convincing, it must be said, in the role of a Family Actually Arriving at the Ballpark. The briefcase was in plain sight on the stroller, on a rack underneath the baby. The guards at Gate 4A helped get the stroller over a seam in the pavement, and ushered the family inside, seeing but not seeing the briefcase.

There was one other solution to the game-or-bag dilemma: Ball Park Lanes, a bowling alley across River Avenue from the entrance to the right-field bleachers. A line had formed at the counter of the pro shop, where Sam Martinez was checking bags. The price per bag was whatever you wanted to pay. "I'm not charging," Sam said. "At a time like this, you can't charge nobody nothing." But everyone was leaving three or five dollars, and the bags were piling up at Sam's feet—dozens and dozens of bags. Sam sorted dollar bills. "Whatever you say," he said, "make sure you put in that I'm an American patriot."

—*Nick Paumgarten*



"If we can just get beyond this 'I'm the boss' mentality and concentrate on a simple 'What I say goes' outlook, I think this will all work out."

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PARIS POSTCARD
GRAND ILLUSION

At noon on Friday, September 14th, France joined the rest of Europe in observing three minutes of silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Washington and New York. It proved to be the noisiest three minutes of silence imaginable. In the center of Montparnasse, trucks and motorcycles blazed and blared through the intersection; horns honked; people talked on their cell phones; waiters shouted through the noontime rush at cafés. Television programming did go black, and schools and companies observed the silence, but there was still some dissent. A newspaper account of a Communist Party gathering that took place a few days later featured comments from the assembled guests. "Was there a minute of silence for the victims of American crimes, for the Vietnamese children who were napalmed?" one person asked. Another said, "We didn't do three minutes for the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or for those of the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila."

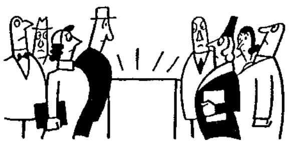
The reluctance to pause over the American catastrophe would be insignificant if it had been limited to a meeting of political marginals, but that was not quite the case. In the first issue of *Le Monde* to appear after the attacks, the newspaper's editor, Jean-Marie Colombani, published on the front page a solemn editorial entitled "We Are All Americans," and in the days to come there were many such pieces in the press and also many similarly sympathetic gestures, including a flood of pro-American E-mails and letters to the Peace Museum in Caen; yet a hint of the political posturing ahead was provided by an article elsewhere in the paper on the "American extreme right," which warned readers that it was still possible that white supremacists had been behind the hijackings. An academic at the prestigious National Center for Scientific Research, in Paris, Marie-José Mondzain, wrote a piece for *Le Monde* called "I Don't Feel American." "As in any murder screenplay," she wrote, "the investigator asks: who profits from the crime? The Palestinians? Of course not. The Afghans? . . . The poor? The oppressed? Of course not. . . . Those who come out more arrogant and stronger than ever are Bush, Putin, and Sharon. What a success!" Four of the eleven candidates competing for the French Presidency—three on the far left, and one, Jean-Marie Le Pen, on the far right—told the local press that the United States essentially had itself to blame for the attacks.

In Parisian circles, one expects a vast range of ideas from around the world to be taken seriously—that's one of the pleasures of being here. But in my café in Montparnasse, and elsewhere, the French men and women I talked with—cartoonists, computer programmers, professors—often joined their words of concern to critiques of American policy. The critiques were familiar, but the tone and the point were now hard to take. Over baklava and sweet mint tea at a café outside a mosque, friends of mine from Iran and Algeria, who knew at first hand the agonies of war, warmly expressed sympathy and asked me for news of my family in Manhattan. As I began to answer, a French filmmaker at the table cut me off to complain that, with all the talk about the Twin Towers, everyone forgets about Bhopal.

The particular melancholy of reading some of the French op-ed warriors lifted, at least in part, last Wednesday, with the publication, in *Le Monde*, of a morally lucid article, "The Nihilist Equation," by André Glucksmann and Romain Goupil. The authors are a political odd couple: both were left-wing militants in 1968, but Glucksmann, a philosopher, became disillusioned with Communist tyranny, whereas Goupil, a filmmaker and writer who was brought up in a working-class environment, has remained faithful to socialist ideals. In eleven ardent and erudite paragraphs, the two men dramatically unmask the perpetrators' aims: "The master terrorist has no conditions. He wants our unconditional surrender. He wants our enslavement." They declare, "We must avoid justifying," rejecting equally the "*adulateurs*" of America and the "*contempteurs*," since the particular flaws of American policy are beside the point: "the nihilist offensive follows its own logic." To return from the brink of the abyss, they refer to the heroic resisters aboard United Airlines Flight 93, who battled the hijackers and forced the plane to crash before it could reach Washington. "Nihilism," they conclude, "is not invincible," and, in so many ways, it was good to hear them say it.

—*Richard Brody*

DEPT. OF MEMORY
WHERE WERE YOU, REALLY?



A week after the attacks on the World Trade Center, two men were at the southeast corner of Fourteenth Street and Fifth Avenue, sitting at a small table that domesticated the sidewalk like a lemonade stand. The pair were making no approaches to passersby, but people were in the mood for human contact, and they came forward, and even formed a line. And, when people heard the pitch, they seemed glad, because they found themselves being asked the very question they were most ready to answer: "Where were you when you first heard?"

Psychologists call it a "flashbulb" memory—when a cataclysmic event creates a recollection of seemingly photographic vividness and permanence. This is the memory of a face, or the exact arrangement of the furniture, at the moment bad news is delivered. There are academic debates about the singularity, accuracy, and fixedness of these memories—and the two men on the corner, researchers from the New School University, were joining these debates with a thirteen-page questionnaire entitled "Your Reactions to the Recent Terrorist Attack." They were asking New Yorkers to return the form in a day or two, and then be available for a follow-up questionnaire a year later. There were forty-three questions, among them "What time was it on the East Coast when you first became aware of the attack?"; "How many airplanes were involved in the attack?"; "Where was President Bush when the attack occurred?" Participants were also asked to list six events in chronological order: the attack on the Pentagon, on the first tower, on the second; the collapse of one tower, then the other; and the plane crash outside Pittsburgh.

A few days later, returned questionnaires were filling the office pigeonhole of William Hirst, a professor of psychology at the New School. He is a tall, salt-and-pepper-haired man who is just old enough to have a flashbulb memory of President Kennedy's assassination. (He was in an elementary-school art class.) He had written the questionnaire with a fellow memory scholar, and it had been distributed in New York and six other cities. He is expecting about fifteen hundred replies.

Hirst once studied the memories that Romanians had of prices in the period before the collapse of the Soviet empire. "The prices were cheaper if the subjects yearned for the old Communist days, and more expensive if they did not yearn," he said. That kind of finding reinforces a long-standing psychological conviction: that most memories are highly unreliable. But the flashbulb hypothesis, first published in 1977 by Harvard researchers Roger Brown and James Kulik, was a challenge to that conviction. They claimed that these memories were detailed and almost indelible.

Since then, the research has tended to focus on the question of accuracy. The psychologist Ulric Neisser, for example, who realized that his own flashbulb memory of the bombing of Pearl Harbor must be warped (in his mind, an announcer interrupted a baseball game on the radio, but this was December), researched memories of the Challenger disaster, in 1986, using questionnaires completed immediately after the event and then almost three years later. He found that flashbulb memories were no more steady than any other memory. (Subjects tended to say, for instance, that they had heard the news on the television, when in fact they had heard it from a friend and had then rushed to a television.) Some subjects were so persuaded by the vividness of their years-old memory that they refused to accept the evidence of their own, contradictory statement made a few days after the event.

Like some previous research, Hirst's study will test the "Where were you?" question—the knock on the door—but it will also investigate memories of the event itself. As Hirst says, most of our flashbulb experiences have been of "one-shot deals"—an assassination, an explosion. There is little to remember. But on September 11th, in a way that might seem to unseat the flashbulb metaphor (which photograph, out of all of them?), events unfolded, and Hirst's survey asks for details of that unfolding.

Hirst suspects that we will make mistakes in the ordering of events, and that the chain of disasters will become compressed in time. And although this is not directly addressed by the questionnaire, he imagines that events from this period will become drawn toward the "anchor" of September 11th, so that a wedding attended last July will, some years from now, feel as though it happened in late August. And people will fail to recognize a change in their emotional response to what happened. "Fewer people a year from now will want to 'kill those bastards,' but they will deny even having thought of that."

Hirst has to wait a year. Meanwhile, there is a pile of questionnaires on his desk, including one from a respondent who estimated having spent forty per cent of his or her waking time watching television since the attacks, but who has already placed the Pentagon crash after the collapse of the Twin Towers.

—*Ian Parker*

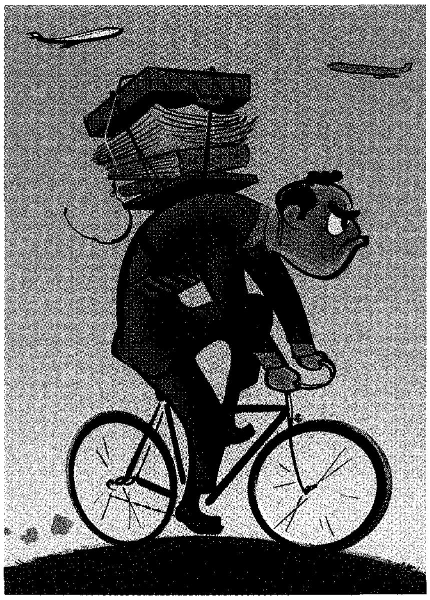
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
GOODBYE, J.F.K.-COLUMBUS

Ryan Bingham, the hero of "Up in the Air," Walter Kirn's new novel, is what once upon a time we would have called a "road warrior." Bingham is a business consultant who spends every day on a plane and every night in a hotel. He flies thousands of miles for a business lunch. He's obsessed with piling up frequent-flier miles. He does his paperwork in the airport chapel and gets his news from the TV in the club room. He knows the ticket-counter personnel better than his own family. He says simply, "Planes and airports are my home."

Three weeks ago, you could wander into any airport in America and see Ryan Binghams everywhere: the investment banker, on his way to a quick client dinner in Singapore, sipping fresh-squeezed orange juice in the Admirals Club; the marketing director popping pills; the tech-firm vice-president tapping into his company's intranet via wireless modem while simultaneously telling his wife, on the cell, "No, it's Chicago today, Akron tomorrow." These travellers all lived together in what Ryan Bingham calls "Airworld." But Airworld is different now. Before September 11th, Bingham, in his effortless glide through the unguarded candylands of the nation's airports, was the embodiment of contemporary business culture. Now he seems like a relic.

In the United States, business and travel evolved together, almost in lockstep. In the late nineteenth century, wholesale "drummers" would roam the country by railroad for months at a time, collecting orders and eventually returning with goods. Their successors, the travelling salesmen, were the Ryan Binghams of their day, relying first on the train and then on the automobile. A salesman for a big company might hit twenty-five towns in as many days. The advent of the airplane meant that those towns could be farther apart. When the nation's airports were being built, in the nineteen-thirties, businessmen's travel patterns helped determine their location and size. Soon salesmen were joined in the air by corporate middle managers, dispatched to check on far-flung divisions, and, eventually, by investment bankers and lawyers, the wandering knights in the new global kingdom of corporate finance.

From a business angle, though, there has always been a big problem with air travel: it is expensive. And that hasn't changed much over time. Even as flying got cheaper for everyone else, with SuperSaver fares and nonrefundable tickets, it remained pricey for business travellers. As a result, travel spending became a major cost (typically the second-largest discretionary expense) of doing business. Air travel was also inefficient. Last year, nearly a quarter of all flights arrived late or were cancelled. Executives were spending more time sitting on the tarmac than they were in meetings.



ERIC PALMA

What's more, companies could never be sure that they were getting a good return on their money and time. Travelling thousands of miles for a brief meeting was something that you did mainly out of habit and out of fear that if you didn't your competitor would, and you'd lose the business. It was a face-time arms race: companies were spending billions of dollars on travel, and wasting millions of man-hours, to keep pace with one another. The real winners were the airlines.

In the past couple of years, companies had made tentative moves—cutbacks in travel budgets, renegotiated corporate deals with airlines—toward changing their approach. After September 11th, there was no longer anything tentative about it. Businesses started grounding their executives. The terrorist attacks, obviously, have made the travel problem worse. With increased security, travel will take longer, and people will balk at spending eight hours to fly five hundred miles for lunch. Frustration, more than fear, will take a toll.

Crises can be catalysts. The airlines have pointed to the tragedy as the reason for large-scale layoffs, but some of those layoffs were likely anyway. In a similar manner, the tragedy has forced businesses to cut travel costs—to do what they couldn't figure out how to do before. The current curtailment of travel amounts to an experiment: can deals get done without handshakes and backslaps?

Of course, people have been predicting the decline of in-person meetings for the past twenty years, under headlines—all of them premature—like "Teleconferencing a Growing Medium" (1981); "Teleconferencing Eliminates Needless Corporate Travel" (1985); and "Future Is Now for Videoconferencing" (1996). The problem is that all those predictions were based on a sort of technological determinism: because videoconferencing—or E-mail, or Webcasting—was more efficient than flying a team of executives thousands of miles, it would necessarily win out. In fact, studies have shown that "social influence"—institutional history, corporate leadership, peer pressure—has a major effect on how people decide whether a technology is valuable or not. And corporate tradition has always held that meeting someone face to face is the way real business gets done.

What had to change was not the attitude toward the new technology but the attitude toward the old one. With seventy per cent of businesses saying that they're contemplating restrictions on business travel, the idea of a new way of selling doesn't seem so outlandish anymore. Who's Ryan Bingham now? Willy Loman with a million frequent-flier miles.

—*James Surowiecki*

ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

WHAT WENT WRONG

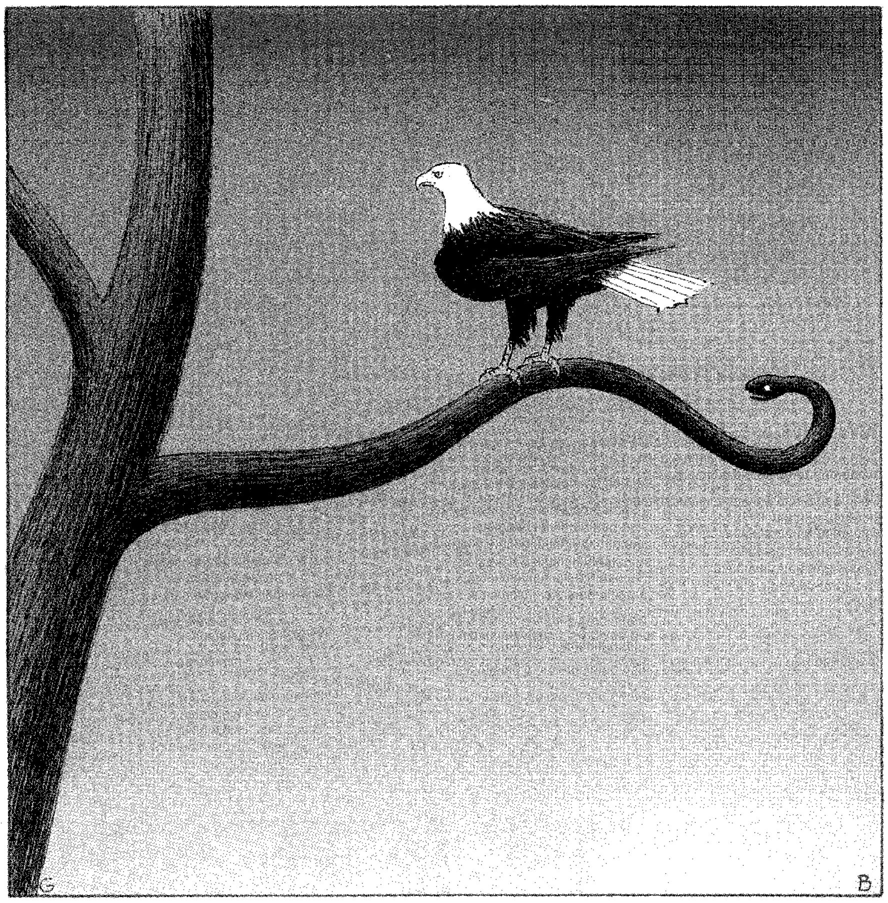
The C.I.A. and the failure of American intelligence.

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

After more than two weeks of around-the-clock investigation into the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the American intelligence community remains confused, divided, and unsure about how the terrorists operated, how many there were, and what they might do next. It was that lack of solid information, government officials told me, that was the key factor behind the Bush Administration's decision last week not to issue a promised white paper listing the evidence linking Osama bin Laden's organization to the attacks.

There is consensus within the government on two issues: the terrorist attacks were brilliantly planned and executed, and the intelligence community was in no way prepared to stop them. One bureaucratic victim, the officials said, may be George Tenet, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, whose resignation is considered a necessity by many in the Administration. "The system is after Tenet," one senior officer told me. "It wants to get rid of him."

The investigators are now split into at least two factions. One, centered in the F.B.I., believes that the terrorists may not have been "a cohesive group," as one involved official put it, before they started training and working together on this operation. "These guys look like a pickup basketball team," he said. "A bunch of guys who got together." The F.B.I. is still trying to sort out the identities and backgrounds of the hijackers. The fact is, the official acknowledged, "we don't know much about them."



"Do they go chem/bio in one, two, or three years?" one senior general asked.

These investigators suspect that the suicide teams were simply lucky. "In your wildest dreams, do you think they thought they'd be able to pull off four hijackings?" the official asked. "Just taking out one jet and getting it into the ground would have been a success. These are not supermen." He explained that the most important advantage the hijackers had, aside from the element of surprise, was history: in the past, most hijackings had ended up safely on the ground at a Third World airport, so pilots had been trained to coöperate.

Another view, centered in the Pentagon and the C.I.A., credits the hijackers with years of advance planning and practice, and a deliberate after-the-fact disinformation campaign. "These guys were below everybody's radar—they're professionals," an official said. "There's no more than five or six in a cell. Three men will know the plan; three won't know. They've been 'sleeping' out there for years and years." One military planner told me that many of his colleagues believe that the terrorists "went to ground and pulled phone lines" well before September 11th—that is, concealed traces of their activities. It is widely believed that the terrorists had a support team, and the fact that the F.B.I. has been unable to track down fellow-conspirators who were left behind in the United States is seen as further evidence of careful planning. "Look," one person familiar with the investigation said. "If it were as simple and straightforward as a lucky one-off oddball operation, then the seeds of confusion would not have been sown as they were."

Many of the investigators believe that some of the initial clues that were uncovered about the terrorists' identities and preparations, such as flight manuals, were meant to be found. A former high-level intelligence official told me, "Whatever trail was left was left deliberately—for the F.B.I. to chase."

In interviews over the past two weeks, a number of intelligence officials have raised questions about Osama bin Laden's capabilities. "This guy sits in a cave in Afghanistan and he's running this operation?" one C.I.A. official asked. "It's so huge. He couldn't have done it alone." A senior military officer told me that be-

GUY BILLOUT

cause of the visas and other documentation needed to infiltrate team members into the United States a major foreign intelligence service might also have been involved. "To get somebody to fly an airplane—to kill himself," the official added, further suggests that "somebody paid his family a hell of a lot of money."

"These people are not necessarily all from bin Laden," a Justice Department official told me. "We're still running a lot of stuff out," he said, adding that the F.B.I. has been inundated with leads. On September 23rd, Secretary of State Colin Powell told a television interviewer that "we will put before the world, the American people, a persuasive case" showing that bin Laden was responsible for the attacks. But the widely anticipated white paper could not be published, the Justice Department official said, for lack of hard facts. "There was not enough to make a sale."

The Administration justified the delay by telling the press that most of the information was classified and could not yet be released. Last week, however, a senior C.I.A. official confirmed that the intelligence community had not yet developed a significant amount of solid information about the terrorists' operations, financing, and planning. "One day, we'll know, but at the moment we don't know," the official said.

"To me," he added, "the scariest thing is that these guys"—the terrorists—"got the first one free. They knew that the standard operating procedure in an aircraft hijacking was to play for time. And they knew for sure that after this the security on airplanes was going to go way up. So whatever they've planned for the next round they had in place already."

The concern about a second attack was repeated by others involved in the investigation. Some in the F.B.I. now suspect that the terrorists are following a war plan devised by the convicted conspirator Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, who is believed to have been the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Yousef was involved in plans that called for, among other things, the releasing of poisons in the air and the bombing of the tunnels between New York City and New Jersey. The government's concern about the potential threat from hazardous-waste haulers was heightened by the Yousef case.

"Do they go chem/bio in one, two, or three years?" one senior general asked rhetorically. "We must now make a difficult transition from reliance on law enforcement to the preëmptive. That part is hard. Can we recruit enough good people?" In recent years, he said, "we've been hiring kids out of college who are computer geeks." He continued, "This is about going back to deep, hard dirty work, with tough people going down dark alleys with good instincts."

Today's C.I.A. is not up to the job. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, in 1991, the C.I.A. has become increasingly bureaucratic and unwilling to take risks, and has promoted officers who shared such values. ("The consciousness of kind," one former officer says.) It has steadily reduced its reliance on overseas human intelligence and cut the number of case officers abroad—members of the clandestine service, now known formally as the Directorate of Operations, or D.O., whose mission is to recruit spies. (It used to be called the "dirty tricks" department.) Instead, the agency has relied on liaison relationships—reports from friendly intelligence services and police departments around the world—and on technical collection systems.

It won't be easy to put agents back in the field. During the Cold War, the agency's most important mission was to recruit spies from within the Soviet Union's military and its diplomatic corps. C.I.A. agents were assigned as diplomatic or cultural officers at American embassies in major cities, and much of their work could be done at diplomatic functions and other social events. For an agent with such cover, the consequence of being exposed was usually nothing more than expulsion from the host country and temporary reassignment to a desk in Washington. Today, in Afghanistan, or anywhere in the Middle East or South Asia, a C.I.A. operative would have to speak the local language and be able to blend in. The operative should seemingly have nothing to do with any Americans, or with the American embassy, if there is one. The status is known inside the agency as "nonofficial cover," or NOC. Exposure could mean death.

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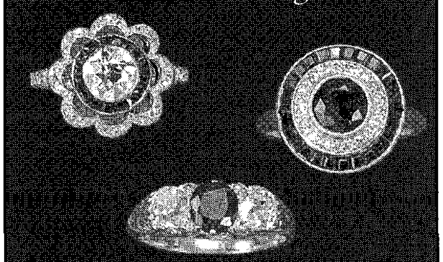

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such officer operating today inside Islamic-fundamentalist circles. In an essay published last summer in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Reuel Marc Gerecht, who served for nearly a decade as a case officer in the C.I.A.'s Near East Division, quoted one C.I.A. man as saying, "For Christ's sake, most case officers live in the suburbs of Virginia. We don't do that kind of thing." Another officer told Gerecht, "Operations that include diarrhea as a way of life don't happen."

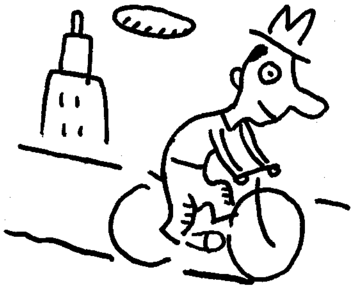
At the same time, the D.O. has been badly hurt by a series of resignations and retirements among high-level people, including four men whose names are little known to the public but who were widely respected throughout the agency: Douglas Smith, who spent thirty-one years in the clandestine service; William Lofgren, who at his retirement, in 1996, was chief of the Central Eurasia Division; David Manners, who was chief of station in Amman, Jordan, when he left the agency, in 1998; and Robert Baer, an Arabic speaker who was considered perhaps the best on-the-ground field officer in the Middle East. All left with feelings of bitterness over the agency's procedures for running clandestine operations.

"We'll never solve the terrorism issue until we reconstitute the D.O.," a former senior clandestine officer told me. "The first line of defense, and the most crucial line of defense, is human intelligence." Baer, who was awarded a Career Intelligence Medal after his resignation, in late 1997, said, "You wouldn't believe how bad it is. What saved the White House on Flight 93"—the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania—"was a bunch of rugby players. Is that what you're paying thirty billion dollars for?" He was referring to the federal budget for intelligence. He and his colleagues aren't surprised that the F.B.I. had no warning of the attack. "The bureau is wonderful in solving crimes after they're committed," one C.I.A. man said. "But it's not good at penetration. We've got to do it."

Today, the C.I.A. doesn't have enough qualified case officers to man its many stations and bases around the world. Two retired agents have been brought back on a rotating basis to take temporary charge of the small base in Karachi, Pakistan, a focal point for terrorist activity. (Karachi was the site of the murder, in 1995, of two Americans, one of them a C.I.A. employee, allegedly in retaliation for the arrest in Pakistan of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef.) A retired agent also runs the larger C.I.A. station in Dacca, Bangladesh, a Muslim nation that could be a source of recruits. Other retirees run C.I.A. stations in Africa.

One hard question is what lengths the C.I.A. should go to. In an interview, two former operations officers cited the tactics used in the late nineteen-eighties by the Jordanian security service, in its successful effort to bring down Abu Nidal, the Palestinian who led what was at the time "the most dangerous terrorist organization in existence," according to the State Department. Abu Nidal's group was best known for its role in two bloody gun and grenade attacks on check-in desks for El Al, the Israeli airline, at the Rome and Vienna airports in December, 1985. At his peak, Abu Nidal threatened the life of King Hussein of Jordan—whom he called "the pygmy king"—and the King responded, according to the former intelligence officers, by telling his state security service, "Go get them."

The Jordanians did not move directly against suspected Abu Nidal followers but seized close family members instead—mothers and brothers. The Abu Nidal suspect would be approached, given a telephone, and told to call his mother, who would say, according to one C.I.A. man, "Son, they'll take care of me if you don't do what they ask." (To his knowledge, the official carefully added, all the suspects agreed to talk before any family members were actually harmed.) By the early nineteen-nineties, the group was crippled by internal dissent and was no longer a significant terrorist organization. (Abu Nidal, now in his sixties and in poor health, is believed to be living quietly in Egypt.) "Jordan is the one nation that totally succeeded in penetrating a group," the official added. "You have to get their families under control."



Such tactics defy the American rule of law, of course, and the C.I.A.'s procedures, but, when it comes to Osama bin Laden and his accomplices, the official insisted, there is no alternative. "We need to do this—knock them down one by one," he said. "Are we serious about getting rid of the problem—instead of sitting around making diversity quilts?"

A few days after the attacks, Vice-President Dick Cheney defended the C.I.A.'s director, George Tenet, on television, saying that it would be a "tragedy" to look for "scapegoats." President Bush subsequently added a note of support with a visit to C.I.A. headquarters. In an interview last week, one top C.I.A. official also defended Tenet. "We know there's a lot of Monday-morning quarterbacking going on, but people don't understand the conditions that George inherited," he told me. "You can't penetrate a six-man cell when they're brothers and cousins—no matter how much Urdu you know." The official acknowledged that there was much dissatisfaction with the C.I.A.'s performance, but he said, "George has not gotten any word other than that the President has full confidence in him." He went on, "George wouldn't resign in a situation like this."

I was informed by other officials, however, that Tenet's days are numbered. "They've told him he's on his way out," one official said. "He's trying to figure it out—whether to go gracefully or let it appear as if he's going to be fired." A White House adviser explained Cheney's public endorsement of Tenet by saying, "In Washington, your friends always stab you in the chest. Somebody has to take the blame for this." It was his understanding, he added, that "after a decent interval—whenever they get some traction on the problem—he will depart. I've heard three to six months." Even one of Tenet's close friends told me, "He's history."

Tenet's standing was further undermined, after September 11th, by what proved to have been a series of wildly optimistic claims about the effectiveness of the C.I.A.'s Counter Terrorism Center, which was set up in 1986 after a wave of international bombings, airplane hijackings, and kidnappings. The idea was to bring together experts from every Amer-

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"It's a case of the cutes, for which there is no known cure."

• •

ican police agency, including the Secret Service, into a "fusion center," which would coördinate intelligence data on terrorism. In October, 1998, after four men linked to bin Laden were indicted for their role in the bombings at the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, reporters for *Newsweek* were given a tour of the center. The indictments, *Newsweek* reported, "were intended as a clear message to bin Laden and his fugitive followers: the United States knows who they are and where to find them. . . . The story of how the C.I.A. and F.B.I., once bitter bureaucratic rivals, collaborated to roll up bin Laden's elusive network is a tale of state-of-the-art sleuthing—and just plain luck."

But in fact the C.T.C. was not authorized to recruit or handle agents overseas—that task was left to the D.O. and its stations in the Middle East, which had their own priorities. The C.T.C. was bolstered with more money and more manpower after the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, but it remained a paper-shuffling unit whose officers were not required to be proficient in foreign languages. Many of the C.I.A.'s old hands have told me that the C.T.C., despite its high profile, was not an assignment of choice for a young and ambitious D.O. officer. The C.T.C. and two of the other major intelligence centers—dealing with narcotics and nuclear-nonproliferation issues—are so consumed by internecine warfare that the professional analysts find it difficult to do their jobs. "They're all fighting among each other," said one senior manager who took early retirement and whose last assignment was as the director of one of the centers. "There's no concentration on issues."

In 1986, Robert Baer, freshly arrived as a case officer from Khartoum, was drafted into the Counter Terrorism Center, a few months after it was set up, by its director, Duane (Dewey) Clarridge. A draft of a memoir Baer wrote, which will be published by Crown this fall, depicts what happened next:

> The first few months was about as exhilarating as it can get in the spy business. Dewey had authority to pretty much do anything he wanted against the terrorists. He had all the money he wanted. . . . It wasn't long, though, before the politics of intelligence undermined everything Dewey tried to do. . . . It was too risky. A botched—or even a successful—operation would piss off a friendly foreign government. Someone would be thrown out of his cushy post. Someone could even get killed. . . .
>
> You'd ask [the C.I.A. station in] Bonn to recruit a few Arabs and Iranians to track the Middle East émigré community in West Germany, and it would respond that it didn't have enough officers. You'd ask Beirut to meet a certain agent traveling to Lebanon, and it would refuse because of some security problem. It was nothing but bureaucratic foot-dragging, but it effectively hamstrung anything Dewey tried to do. After six months, Dewey could put his hands on only two Arabic speakers—another officer and me.

Many people in the intelligence community, in their conversations with me, complained bitterly about how difficult it was to work with the Directorate of Operations, even during a crisis. "In order to work on a problem with D.O.," a former senior scientist told me, "you have to be in D.O." Similarly, a congressional observer of the C.I.A. came to understand the bureaucratic power of the D.O. "To succeed as director of Central Intelligence," he said, "you have to ingratiate yourself with the D.O." Other intelligence sources have told me that the D.O.'s machinations led, at one point, to a feud with the National Security Agency over who would control the Special Collection Service, a joint undertaking of the two agencies that deploys teams of electronics specialists around the world to monitor diplomatic and other communications in moments of crisis. The S.C.S.'s highly secret operations, which produced some of the Cold War's most valuable data, are usually run from secure sites inside American embassies. Competence and sophistication were hindered by an absurd amount of bickering. A military man who in 1998 was involved in a Middle East signals-intelligence operation told me that he was not able to discuss the activity with representatives of the C.I.A. and the N.S.A. at the same time. "I used to meet with one in a safe house in Virginia, break for lunch, and then meet with the other," the officer said. "They wouldn't be in the same room."

If the current crisis does lead to an overhaul of the agency, the Senate and House intelligence committees are not likely to be of much help. Lofgren, Smith, Manners, and Baer, among others, repeatedly met with legislators and their staffs and testified before Congress in an effort to bring about changes. But nothing was done.

Not surprisingly, Republicans and Democrats have differing explanations for what went wrong. One Republican staff member said that Senator Richard C. Shelby, of Alabama, who was the committee’s chairman until early this year, understood that the problem was at the top of the agency. “We do have guys in the field with great ideas who are not supported by the establishment,” the staff member said. But none of the senior Democrats, he said, wanted to embarrass the director, George Tenet, by holding an inquiry or hearings into the various complaints. (Tenet had spent years working for the Democrats on the committee staff, and had served as a member of Bill Clinton’s National Security Council staff before joining the C.I.A.’s management team.)

One Democrat, however, blamed the process within the Senate committee, which, he said, neglected terrorism in favor of more politically charged issues. “Tenet’s been briefing about bin Laden for years, but we weren’t organized to consider what are threats to the United States. We’re chasing whatever the hell is in the news at the moment.”

Former Senator Bob Kerrey, of Nebraska, who served for four years as the Intelligence Committee’s ranking Democrat and is now the president of the New School, in New York, is one of Tenet’s defenders. But Kerrey also acknowledges that he no longer knows “how well we did our job” of legislative oversight. “Nobody with any responsibility can walk away from this. We missed something here.”

Kerrey remains angry about the U.S. policy toward Afghanistan in the years after its defeat of the Soviet Union. “The Cold War was over, and we shut down Afghanistan”—that is, ceased all intelligence operations. “From Bush to Clinton, what happened is one of the most embarrassing American foreign-policy decisions, as bad as Vietnam,” Kerrey said. He cited a botched 1996 C.I.A. plot to overthrow President Saddam Hussein of Iraq: “We also had a half-baked Iraqi operation and sent a signal that we’re not serious.”

Last June, Shelby, after a tour of the Persian Gulf and a series of intelligence briefings, told a Washington *Post* reporter that bin Laden was “on the run, and I think he will continue to be on the run, because we are not going to let up.” He went on, “I don’t think you could say he’s got us hunkered down. I believe he’s more hunkered down.” After the bombing, however, Shelby was among the first to suggest publicly that it was time for Tenet to go. “I think he’s a good man, and he’s done some good things, but there have been a lot of failures on his watch,” Shelby told *USA Today*. Tenet, he said, lacked “the stature to control all the agencies. In a sense, he is in charge, but in reality he’s not.”

One friend and former colleague of Tenet’s says that his refusal to urge the Senate leadership to deal with the hard issues was symptomatic of his problems as C.I.A. director. “He’s a politician, too,” that person said of Tenet. “That’s why he shouldn’t have been there, because he had no status to tell the senators, ‘You don’t know what you’re talking about.’ ”

In his memoir, Robert Baer describes the “fatal malaise” that came over the Paris station of the C.I.A. in the early nineties: “Case officers weren’t recruiting new agents. The agents already on the books were old. They’d lost their access. And no one seemed to care.” Many in the agency were shocked in early 1992 when Milton Bearden, the head of the Soviet-East European division—he had also played a major role in the C.I.A.’s support for the Afghan rebels in their brutal war against the Soviet Union—informed his overseas stations that Russia would now be treated like any other friendly nation, such as Germany or France. The C.I.A. was no longer in the business of recruiting agents to spy against the Russians. In addition, C.I.A. surveillance apartments were closed and wiretaps turned off throughout the Middle East and Europe. “We’ll never know the losses we had in terms of not capitalizing on the Soviet collapse,” a retired official said. Former high-level Soviet officials with intelligence information or other data were rebuffed. “Walk-ins were turned away. It was stunning, and, as far as I knew, nobody fought it.”

Little changed when Bill Clinton took office, in 1993. Baer, now assigned, at his request, to the tiny C.I.A. outpost in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, near the Af-

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ghanistan border, watched helplessly as Saudi-backed Islamic fundamentalists—the precursors of the Taliban—consolidated training bases and began to recruit supporters and run operations inside the frontier nations of the former Soviet Union.

In 1995, the agency was widely criticized after the news came out that a paid informant in Guatemala had been involved in the murders of an American innkeeper and the Guatemalan husband of an American lawyer. The informant had been kept on the C.I.A. payroll even though his activities were known to the Directorate of Operations. John Deutch, the C.I.A.'s third director in three years, responded to the abuses, and to the public outcry, by issuing a directive calling for prior approval from headquarters before any person with criminal or human-rights problems could be recruited. The approval, Deutch later explained, was to be based on a simple balancing test: "Is the potential gain in intelligence worth the cost that might be associated with doing business with a person who may be a murderer?"

The "scrub order," as it came to be known, was promulgated by Deutch and his colleagues with the best of intentions, and included provisions for case-by-case review. But in practice hundreds of "assets" were indiscriminately stricken from the C.I.A.'s payroll, with a devastating effect on anti-terrorist operations in the Middle East.

The scrub order led to the creation of a series of screening panels at C.I.A. headquarters. Before a new asset could be recruited, a C.I.A. case officer had to seek approval from a Senior Review Panel. "It was like a cardiologist in California deciding whether a surgeon in New York City could cut a chest open," a former officer recalled. Potential agents were being assessed by officials who had no firsthand experience in covert operations. ("Americans hate intelligence—just hate it," Robert Baer recalls thinking.) In the view of the operations officers, the most important weapons in the war against international terrorism were being evaluated by men and women who, as one of the retired officers put it, "wouldn't drive to a D.C. restaurant at night because they were afraid of the crime problem."

Other bureaucratic panels began "multiplying like rabbits, one after another," a former station chief said. Experienced officers who were adamant about continuing to recruit spies found that obtaining approval before making a pitch had become a matter of going from committee to committee. "In the old days, they'd say, 'Go get them,' " the retired officer said. Yet another review process, known as A.V.S.—the asset-validation system—was put in place. Another retired officer told me, "You'd have to write so much paper that guys would spend more time in the station writing reports than out on the street."

"It was mindless," a third officer said. "Look, we recruited assholes. I handled bad guys. But we don't recruit people from the Little Sisters of the Poor—they don't *know* anything." He went on, "What we've done to *ourselves* is criminal. There are a half-dozen good guys out there trying to keep it together."

"It did make the workday a lot easier," Robert Baer said of the edict. "I just watched CNN. No one cared." The C.I.A.'s vital South Group, made up of eight stations in central Asia—all threatened by fundamentalist organizations, especially in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, with links to the Taliban and bin Laden—had no agents by the mid-nineteen-nineties, Baer said. "The agency was going away."

Unlike many senior officials at C.I.A. headquarters, Baer had lived undercover, in the nineteen-eighties, in Beirut and elsewhere in the Middle East, and he well understood the ability of terrorist organizations to cover their tracks. He told me that when the C.I.A. started to go after the Islamic Jihad, a radical Lebanese group linked to a series of kidnappings in the Reagan years, "its people systematically went through documents all over Beirut, even destroying student records. They had the airport wired and could pick the Americans out. They knew whom they wanted to kidnap before he landed." The terrorists coped with the American ability to intercept conversations worldwide by constantly changing codes—often doing little more than changing the meanings of commonly used phrases. "There's a professional cadre out there," Baer said. Referring to the terrorists who struck on September 11th, he said, "These people are so damned good." ♦

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE HILLARY PERSPECTIVE

Government suddenly looks good again.

BY NICHOLAS LEMANN

On the two-week anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, I went to see the junior senator from New York, Hillary Rodham Clinton, in Washington. Senator Clinton preceded the rest of us in living with heightened security precautions; she is the only member of Congress who is under twenty-four-hour security protection, from the Secret Service.

I spoke with Clinton at the end of what was supposed to be a back-to-normal day in Washington—or, anyway, the first day President Bush had events on his schedule that were not related to the attack. Clinton was supposed to attend one of them, but it was cancelled at the last minute; things still didn't feel all that normal. Yet in our conversation she was insistently optimistic, as she has been in her public statements since the attack. Clinton has some of the quality of an authority figure from one's youth, a guidance counsellor or a student-body president, determined always to present the most cheery version of reality. But, to the extent that she actually is optimistic, she has good reason to be. She has bet her whole life on the benign centrality of public life, and now, for practically the first time since she placed that bet, government does seem an unambiguously good and important institution in society.

Clinton's office, done up in mustardy yellows and works of art, has the feeling of a living room. She sat in the corner of a sofa while we talked. She is small and moonfaced, with a Midwestern twang. I asked her whether as a consequence of the attack the extremes would be knocked out of the national debate.

"I think it's got the potential for that," she said. "You know, to go back and look at Oklahoma City, which was such a terrible event at the time, I think it did have an impact, and a lasting one. Not to the extent that I would have liked, but it did tone down some of the rabid anti-government haters who were filling our airwaves, and filling our backwoods with survivalist training for some kind of armed defense or rebellion. That really did diminish, after that."

DANIEL ADEL

Will "government" cease to be a dirty word?

"I think the answer is that we saw government in action. It wasn't some abstract target of our discontent. It was the firefighters. It was the emergency workers. It was the elected officials who were leading and comforting. It had a human face. And now, when we're looking at the war against terrorism, we're asking ourselves, How do we beef up security? Well, maybe the government should take it over. How do we protect our borders? Well, the government has to do more. How do we root out these terrorists? Well, the government has to come up with the plans and the intelligence and the resources. We had the luxury—some might say the failure of historical understanding—after the end of the Cold War that gave people the idea that they didn't need a government, or they needed it in only the most rudimentary way, and there was a collective sense of misunderstanding about what government is and does."

Senator Clinton: We join those "whose lives are shaped by the hazards of life."

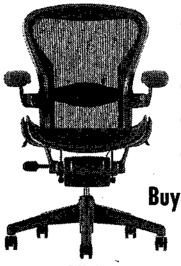
We talked about possible responses to the attack, and then I asked her how she thought people would react to knowing that they are on the receiving end of a murderous anger.

"Oh, I am well aware that it is out there. One of the most difficult experiences that I personally had in the White House was during the health-care debate, being the object of extraordinary rage. I remember being in Seattle. I was there to make a speech about health care. This was probably August of '94. Radio talk-show hosts had urged their listeners to come out and yell and scream and carry on and prevent people from hearing me speak. There were threats that were coming in, and certain people didn't want me to speak, and they started taking weapons off people, and arresting people. I've had firsthand looks at this unreasoning anger and hatred that is focussed on an individual you don't know, a cause that you despise—whatever motivates people."

How do we live knowing this?

"I think we recognize that the sense of invulnerability that has been a hallmark of the American psychological experience has been shattered," Clinton said. "We are now standing shoulder to shoulder with Israelis, who worry when they go to a pizza parlor. Or with Londoners, who got up every day and faced the bombs during the Battle of Britain. Or with most of the rest of the human race that has ever existed, and that exists now, whose lives are shaped by the hazards of life. But that should not be an excuse for either giving in to fear or giving up on life. The purpose of terrorism is to terrorize. And the only way that a terrorist ultimately wins is if you give him permission to defeat you."

When a sudden, terrible blow strikes, people have to rely, at least in the short run, on methods they devised earlier to get themselves through other calamities. I thought I was hearing Senator Clinton do that. ♦



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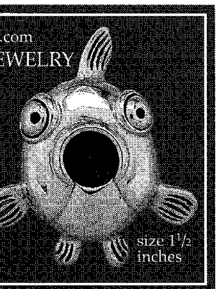

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POSTSCRIPT

THE CHIEF

William Feehan's last fire, after four decades on the job.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

The first and second alarms, which were transmitted together, sounded at 8:47 A.M., the third at 8:50. At 8:55, a 10-60 went out, signalling a major emergency, and four minutes later a fifth alarm sounded. The New York City Fire Department has no formal designation for a blaze that requires more than five alarms, but on September 11th there were five for the north tower and another five for the south tower, and still the alarms continued to ring, first in firehouses in Chelsea and Chinatown, and then in Brooklyn Heights and Williamsburg, and then all across the city, so that in less than thirty minutes more than a hundred companies had been called out. Ladder 24 was called from midtown, and Engine 214 from Bedford-Stuyvesant, and so was Squad 288 from Maspeth, Queens, and Ladder 105 from downtown Brooklyn. Even after the two towers collapsed and tens of thousands of people came streaming out of lower Manhattan covered with ash, the firemen kept coming.

That afternoon, Liz Feehan and her sister Tara waited for news together at Tara's house, in Belle Harbor, Queens. Three of the men in their family were firefighters, and all three were at the World Trade Center that day: Liz and Tara's father, William, the department's first deputy commissioner; their younger brother John; and Tara's husband, Brian Davan. When the phone rang, Tara picked it up and started yelling. Liz immediately concluded that the call was about one of the two younger men. Their father, the second-ranking official in the F.D.N.Y., was, she assumed, too far up the hierarchy to die in the line of duty.

William Michael Feehan had joined the F.D.N.Y. in 1959, and during the next forty-two years held every possible rank in a department that was thick with them, from "proby" to lieutenant to battalion chief to commissioner—something only two or three other people have done in the department's history. Feehan helped fight some of the worst fires in New York, including the Brooklyn Navy Yard fire, in 1960, which killed fifty people, and the Madison Square blaze, in 1966, which killed twelve. For his long, distinguished career, he was venerated by his fellow-firefighters, and also sometimes teased by them. "Billy," his friends used to say, "when you joined the department what were they feeding the horses?" At the time of his death, Feehan was seventy-one years old, six years past the mandatory retirement age for firefighters in the city, and for nearly a decade he had held what is technically a civilian post. Still, he kept handy a helmet and a rubberized suit—known as "turnout gear"—and was fit, and willing, enough to help lay hose.

Before Feehan died, few outside the department or the insular world of city government had heard of him. He did not court publicity, and he rarely attended the functions that high-ranking city officials are invited to. (A favorite excuse of his was that he had tried to stop by but couldn't find a parking space.) As first deputy commissioner, Feehan served under three different commissioners and two different mayors, a tenure that testified at once to his ability and to his equanimity. "He would quietly suggest to you to do something differently, and you always knew that it was good advice, and you always took it," the current commissioner, Thomas Von Essen, told me. Even after Feehan became deputy commissioner, his men continued to address him as "Chief," a lower but, to them, more honorable title.

Feehan began his career with Ladder 3, on East Thirteenth Street in Greenwich Village. One week after the disaster, I went down to the firehouse, a squat brick building constructed under Mayor Jimmy Walker, in 1929. The men in the company refer to it as Ladder 3 Recon, for "reconnaissance," and they like to say that when rescue units get into trouble they call Ladder 3 Recon to get them out of it. The house sits next to a photo shop and across the street from a New York University dormitory. A construction-paper sign posted in one of the dorm's windows read "NYU ♥ FDNY." Normally, the men would have been upstairs, in the firehouse kitchen, cooking dinner and watching TV, but this night they were out on the street receiving condolences, as were firemen all over the city.

On September 11th, Ladder 3 was called on the third alarm. The day shift was just arriving, and the night shift going off duty, which meant that there were two full crews in the house. The company lost twelve men out of a total force of twenty-five. It is still not known where, or how, they died. Someone had pasted pictures of the missing on a piece of poster board, and around this poster, which was propped on an easel, the sidewalk had been transformed into a makeshift shrine. There were dozens of bouquets with notes pinned to them, and candles flickering in pools of wax, and silver balloons, clearly designed for less grave occasions, printed with the message "Thank you." It was six in the evening, the time when New Yorkers start to arrive home from work. People kept coming by to drop off doughnuts and cakes and homemade cookies. An elderly man brought over a plate of apples and honey, in honor of Rosh Hashanah; a woman with red and blue tinsel stars in her hair stopped in to offer the men Shiatsu massages. A woman in her forties brought a mixed bouquet. She seemed unwilling to just add it to the general pile, so she waited for one of the firemen to notice her, and handed it to him. "You guys are the best and the bravest," she said. Then she started to cry.

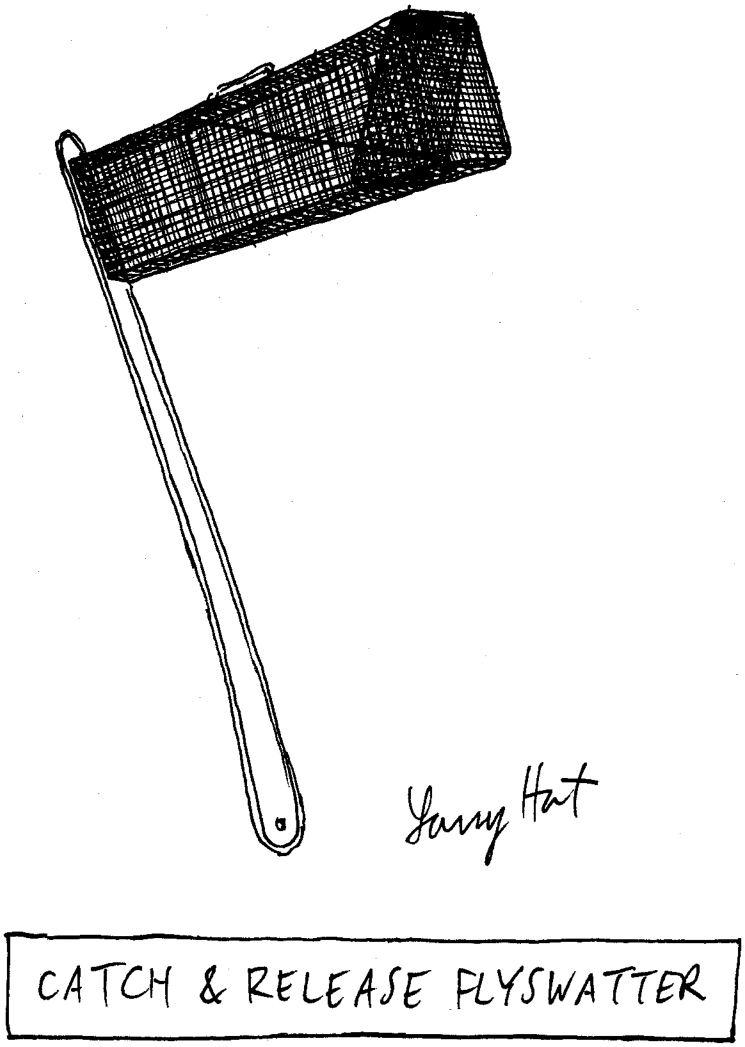
The attack on the World Trade Center left thousands of people mourning fathers and mothers, colleagues, close friends, and children. It left thousands of others, in the city and beyond, who hadn't lost anyone, searching for a focus for their grief. In this context, it was natural for people to gravitate to their local firehouses. One former Manhattanite I know drove in from Westchester to visit the firehouse in his old neighborhood. He had brought a check for the relief fund—the company had lost nine members—and when the fireman he gave it to thanked him he had to turn away, he told me, because he found himself weeping uncontrollably. Not a single firehouse in the city was untouched by the disaster. Among the three hundred and forty-three firefighters who are either dead or missing are members of at least sixty companies.

The only men left in Ladder 3 are those who were not on duty on the morning of the eleventh. I asked one of them, a lieutenant, whether he felt fortunate to have been off that day. He told me the opposite was true. "I wish it was me instead of them," he said, and he felt sure, he told me, that had the situation been reversed his colleagues—his "brothers"—would have felt the same way. "The camaraderie that you have with your brothers—you'd do anything for them," he said.

F.D.N.Y.

Feehan, at right, working with the New York Fire Patrol in the late nineteen-fifties.

William Feehan was born in Queens on September 29, 1929, and grew up in Jackson Heights. His father was a firefighter with Engine 21, and one of his uncles was a priest. In the tradition of old Irish New York, these were the career choices presented to Feehan, and although his parents tried to steer him toward the church he eventually chose the F.D.N.Y. From an early age, Feehan loved fires—he used to run down to Northern Boulevard to watch the engines go by—and in 1956, after graduating from St. John's University and serving in Korea, he joined the New York Fire Pa-



trol, a private force financed by the insurance industry, which is still in operation.

At about the same time, a new F.D.N.Y. commissioner, Edward Cavanagh, instituted a mandatory-retirement policy, and Feehan's father, who was sixty-seven, immediately became overage. In 1992, the year he became first deputy commissioner, Feehan spoke about his father's disappointment in an interview with his oldest son, William, Jr., a human-resources executive, and a friend of his, Harvey Wang, a photographer. "My father lived till he was in his early eighties, and to the day he died I think he felt that Edward Cavanagh passed that bill just to hurt him," Feehan recalled. "I don't think a day went by when he didn't have something unkind to say about Edward Cavanagh for cutting his career short, in the prime of his life, and he carried that bitterness to the grave with him."

From the beginning, Feehan's solidity impressed those he worked with. James Manahan, a firefighter who trained with him, told me, "Billy really made his own reputation. In firefighting, it's crucial how you're perceived by the people you're working with, because when you go above a fire you've got to have trust in the guy that's beneath you. No one would think twice about going above Billy."

In 1956, Feehan married Betty Keegan, whom he had met, also in the tradition of Irish New York, in the Rockaways. Over the next decade, the couple had four children. They moved to a single-family house in Flushing, and, because it wasn't easy to support the family on a fireman's salary, Feehan moonlighted—first as a substitute teacher and later as a security guard for the Helmsley hotels. (Whenever the kids made cracks about Leona or Harry, Feehan asked them if they wanted to take out another college loan.) He also studied hard for the department exams that determine promotions. In 1964, after just five years in the department, Feehan made lieutenant. In 1972, he became a captain, and in 1979 the chief of a battalion.

A week and a half after Feehan died, I went out to the house, on Twenty-eighth Avenue in Flushing. It is, by today's standards, modest, and following Betty's death, in 1996, Feehan continued to live there alone. The day I visited, Liz Feehan, a slim, lively woman who works as a court clerk in Manhattan, was at the house, and so were her brother John and his wife, Debbie, who is a nurse. We sat in the dining room, at a table covered with a lace cloth, surrounded by the bags of Mass cards that had been left at Feehan's wake.

According to his children, Feehan was a man of great faith, and also of great optimism. When they were young, everything they presented to him was "the most special—fill in the blank—in the world," and, when they got older, every house or apartment they moved into was a "gem" or a "home run." "He was your biggest fan," Liz said. "Nothing could not be overcome. He'd say, 'We'll move on and get through this.' "

John looks a lot like the photographs of his father—the same square face and wide-set eyes. He told me that his father hadn't pushed him to become a fireman but had been relieved when he did: "He didn't know what the hell I was going to do, so he was happy that I had a job." Everyone in the department knew him as "Feehan's kid," John said. "It sounds way too pretentious, and I don't mean to be, but it was kind of like I was a prince," he told me. Often, on Saturdays, the two men would have breakfast at the North Shore Diner, in Bayside, and "talk fire." On their days off, they also liked to "buff" fires together—watch their colleagues handle a blaze and later, like a pair of critics, review it.

All of Feehan's children had felt a certain trepidation about the upcoming mayoral election and the inevitable arrival of a new administration. Their father had told them that, no matter who became mayor, he didn't think it likely that he would be asked to stay on. Liz described how their mother, long before Feehan's retirement was even on the horizon, had worried about it: "She used to say, 'I hope your father goes in a fire.' We'd say, 'Speak for yourself.' But she meant that's how he would have wanted to go."

Feehan liked to tell stories. In the interview that he did with his son and Harvey Wang, he told one about how he almost didn't make it into the Fire Department, because of his bad eyesight, and another about the time he was a captain in Harlem and the commissioner, who had come for a visit, ended up posing for photographs with a bookie. He also spoke about Charlie, a fire buff who lived for a while at Ladder 6, in Chinatown, and, having been convinced by the men that Feehan's wife was Chinese, was always plying him with fortune cookies.

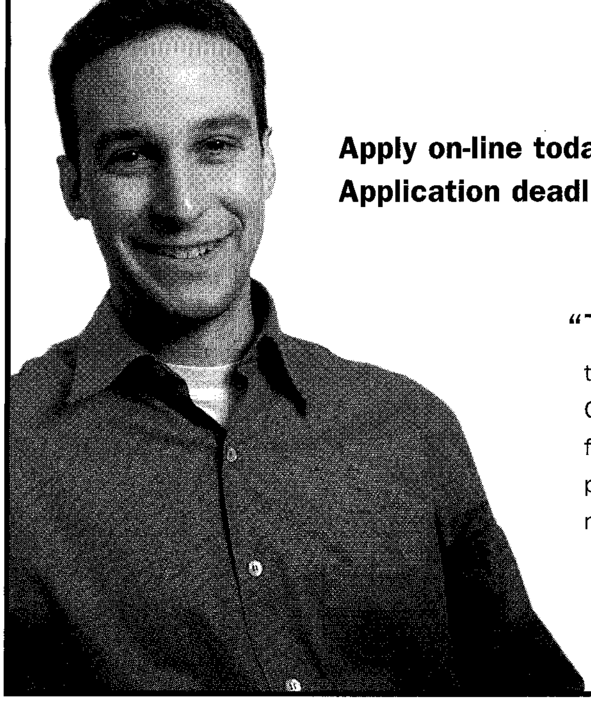
Feehan was a member of Ladder 6 when, in 1970, the company was called to a fire at One New York Plaza, a fifty-story office building at the corner of Water and Broad Streets. The blaze killed two people, and helped bring about the passage of Local Law 5, which requires that all high-rises have sprinkler systems and fire alarms on each floor.

"When we were dispatched to the fire," Feehan recalled, "we left the firehouse heading down East Broadway, and an air line broke. We came to a dead halt and the chauffeur"—the driver of the fire truck—"jumped out and said we were out of service. I was a fairly young lieutenant and this was going to be my first high-rise fire, and there was no way that I was going to miss this fire. There was a hardware store right on the corner, so I sent a guy in, and I said, 'Get some tape,' and we taped this thing up. They called us, and said, 'Ladder 6, what's your location?' We lied and said that we were three blocks from them.

"I remember the chief of the department then was John O'Hagan. I remember him telling us to go to the floor above the fire, and see whether or not there was an access from one floor to the next. We went up the stairway and the floor was just so hot that we couldn't crawl in. My chauffeur, who was very senior, and a very experienced guy, said, 'It's just too hot, we've got to get out of here.' We did, and we went back down and reported to Chief O'Hagan, and told him we couldn't get in on the floor, and he said, 'If you can't make it, you can't make it.' It was like a knife in your heart.

"A short time later, there was a report that there were some people on the upper floors, and we jumped up, because we were kind of depressed from not doing the other job. A guy from the building said, 'I have an elevator that will take you directly up to the top floor.' We went down to the lobby to get this elevator, and he said, 'I'm pretty sure this elevator—' We said, 'Hold it. Pretty sure is not good enough. If we're going to get on this elevator, we have to be sure it is not going to let us off on the fire floor.' Well, to make a long story short, he couldn't guarantee that. The only way to get there was to walk. We walked from the thirty-second floor to the roof and opened the roof, and of course the people reported being trapped weren't there, and now we had to get back down.

"I remember walking down. We had



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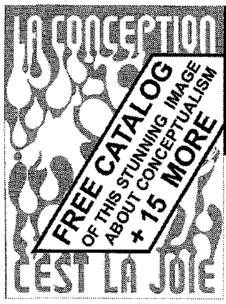

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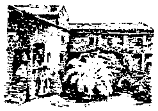

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to stop on every floor, because we were totally exhausted. And I remember one of the senior guys—we were sweating profusely now, we were dirty and grimy, it must have been about eleven o'clock at night—and I remember him sitting on the stairs and looking over, and he said, 'You and your frickin' tape.' "

The F.D.N.Y. has its headquarters in a building in the Metrotech complex, in downtown Brooklyn, and the deputy commissioner's office is on the eighth floor, next door to the commissioner's. A week after the attack, a new first deputy, Mike Regan, was already in place, and when I went to visit I could see that someone had dropped off a half-inch-thick departmental memo entitled "Missing as of September 17, 2001, 1400 hours." Otherwise, things in the office appeared to be pretty much as Feehan had left them. Arranged on the desk were half a dozen pictures of his grandchildren and a stack of his business cards, which he kept in a holder shaped like a fire hydrant. A collection of toy fire engines was displayed on the windowsills, and on the walls were fire-prevention posters drawn by New York City schoolchildren. Feehan's red appointment book was still lying near the phone.

In every municipal department, the commissioners are political appointees, while the people who work for them are civil servants. This distinction is keenly felt, and nowhere more so than among the members of the F.D.N.Y. At the headquarters, I picked up a copy of *Fire Works*, the department's internal newsletter. The issue, which had been published in July, included a Q. & A. with the commissioner. In answer to a question about mandatory training days, Von Essen had written, "When you look up hypocrisy in the dictionary, it should have UFA/UFOA written next to it." The U.F.A. is the firemen's union; the U.F.O.A. is the officers' union.

Feehan's accomplishment, almost unheard of at the Fire Department, was to be equally popular with labor and management. "Very few people are loved by City Hall and the firefighters," Vincent Dunn, a retired F.D.N.Y. senior deputy chief, told me. "Bill Feehan was to the fire commissioner what Colin Powell and Dick Cheney are to the President. He always made the top command look stable." This was not, by all accounts, because Feehan had an accommodating nature; as one of his friends put it, "He was a tough fucking guy." Feehan didn't care for whiners, and he was especially hard on shirkers. In firefighting, it is usually left to the junior man to carry the extinguisher, or "can." One of Feehan's favorite expressions was "If you're the can man, be the can man," and it meant "Just do your job."

Once, Feehan was sitting in a restaurant when he overheard a firefighter at another table boasting that he was fit enough to return to work but planned to squeeze a few extra days out of his medical leave. The next day, the man found himself, with no explanation, assigned to a desk just outside the commissioner's office. Only after he had spent a few days wondering anxiously what had happened did Feehan call him into his office to, as another Fire Department official put it to me, "read him the riot act." More recently, Feehan was involved in a minor traffic accident while driving to the funeral of a firefighter in Staten Island. When he arrived at the office the next day, he saw his name on the list of people who were on medical leave. "More than one person got chewed out for that," John Feehan told me.

Feehan served briefly as the fire commissioner in the last days of David Dinkins's mayoralty. When Rudolph Giuliani was elected, he appointed Howard Safir to head the department, and asked Feehan to stay on as Safir's deputy. A few years later, Safir moved on to become the police commissioner. Feehan thought that he might be reappointed fire commissioner, and when Giuliani passed him over he confided his disappointment to Von Essen, the man who got the job. But, in keeping with his "be the can man" work ethic, Feehan put that disappointment aside and, Von Essen told me, "worked tirelessly to teach me and to mentor me."

During the more than four decades that Feehan served in the F.D.N.Y., the city's composition changed fundamentally, but the department's did not. The *Times* recently published two pages of pictures of the missing firefighters; there were barely a dozen African-American faces and not a single woman's. In the 1992 interview, Feehan acknowledged that critics were right to fault the department for its lack of diversity. "We have failed in that," he said. But he went on to say that he was pained by the way the critics had broadened their attack. "When they talk about a firehouse culture, they talk about it negatively, and this disturbs me, because there is maybe not a firehouse culture but a department culture," he said. "If you destroy the culture this department has, that tradition this department has, you destroy a very basic part of this department, and we just become another city agency. I don't think that when you have a department whose men and women are expected to be ready at any moment to put their life on the line to go to the aid of a stranger, I don't think you can pay people to do that job. There has to be something beyond money that makes them do that, and I think it's the culture of the department."

"High-rise firefighting is a whole art in itself," Feehan once said. "I spent very little time in a high-rise area, and there are chiefs who know more about high-rise firefighting than I'll ever know. When you have your first high-rise fire, the thing that strikes you most is just how long it takes you to get the thing done. It is twenty or twenty-five minutes after you arrive at the scene before you are getting water out of the nozzle on the fire floor."

On the morning of September 11th, Feehan was in his office, where he typically arrived by seven-fifteen. He was at his desk when his son John called with a question about the bibliography for the upcoming lieutenant's exam. Feehan told him that it would be available soon—it was just awaiting the commissioner's approval. A few minutes later, the first plane struck.

There was no precedent for the World Trade Center fire, and no way to fight it except as if there were. Feehan rushed from his office directly to the fire's command post, which, following standard protocol for a high-rise fire, had been set up in the lobby of the burning north tower. Every fire of any significance has such a post, which is basically nothing more than a metal folding table and a set of magnetic tabs labelled with the numbers of the F.D.N.Y. companies. Whoever is in command draws a rough sketch of the site directly onto the table with a felt-tip pen and then uses the magnetic markers to keep track of where the companies have been assigned. Also following standard protocol, the first companies to arrive at the World Trade Center were ordered to get hoses up to the blaze and to try to keep the stairwells open.

When a plane hit the south tower, the command post moved to West Street. Feehan's executive officer, Henry McDonald, was at home monitoring radio traffic. "The last thing I heard over the radio was that they were moving the post 'by orders of Chief Feehan,'" he told me.

Partly shielded by the north tower, the command post on West Street survived the collapse of the south tower, at 9:59 A.M., at which point Feehan and the chief of the department, Peter Ganci, decided to move the post farther north. But before they could do so, the north tower fell. (Von Essen had been called away to brief Mayor Giuliani, and this is why he survived.) Liz Feehan told me she was sure that her father would not have regarded his death as heroic. "We don't know exactly what happened to Dad," she said. "But he would have said, 'I'm not a hero—a wall fell on me. How does that make me a hero?' That's exactly what he would have said."

Feehan's body was one of the first to be pulled from the ruins; it was found that afternoon, while his son John and his son-in-law Brian Davan were nearby, assisting with the rescue operations. The funeral was held the following Saturday at St. Mel's, in Flushing. Among the mourners were Mayor Giuliani, Commissioner Von Essen, and the Speaker of the City Council, Peter Vallone. Ganci was buried on the same day, as was the Fire Department's chaplain, Mychal Judge.

William, Jr., delivered his father's eulogy. He spoke of Feehan's love for his family, his sense of humor, his profound optimism, and, above all, his pride in his work. He told about how, on the night after the attack, he had gone down to the site of the fire to see where his father had died and had found a certain comfort there—a comfort perhaps incomprehensible to someone who is not part of a fire family. Standing amid the wreckage, which at that point was still smoldering, he realized, he said, that "there was no place on earth my father enjoyed more than a fire scene." ♦

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LETTER FROM CAIRO

BEHIND MUBARAK

Egyptian clerics and intellectuals respond to terrorism.

BY JEFFREY GOLDBERG

The Mohandessin section of Cairo is a fashionable district on the west bank of the Nile that contains a number of embassies, boutiques, and American fast-food restaurants. It also houses the Mustafa Mahmoud Mosque, which is named after a physician and Islamic television personality who founded it, twenty years ago. On Friday, September 21st, I arrived at the mosque just as the first worshippers were making their way there, and the egalitarianism that is one of the great virtues of the Muslim prayer service was evident: they were dark-skinned and light, rich and poor; one man drove up in a blue Jaguar; others, wearing grease-stained galabiyas and crude sandals, came on foot, or by donkey cart. (Women, as is customary, prayed apart, in another, smaller hall.) I had arranged to meet the mosque's imam, Sheikh Nasser Abdelrazi. A slight, anxious man, he preëmptively offered up the observation that "Muslims are gentle and Islam is peace."

Many in Cairo are on the defensive in the wake of the terror attacks on New York and the Pentagon. Greater Cairo, a city of sixteen million people, is the intellectual capital of the Arab world—home to its moviemakers, many of its great writers, and some of its most respected interpreters of Islam. Muslim leaders here are sensitive to the image of their faith—especially now, because Egyptians are among those allegedly involved in the attacks. Muhammad Atta, who is believed to have flown one of the hijacked planes into the World Trade Center, is the son of a middle-class Cairo lawyer. Ayman al-Zawahiri, a former leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, a fundamentalist group that sought to turn Egypt into an Islamic state, is said to be second-in-command to Osama bin Laden, the Saudi exile who is suspected of directing the attacks.

I did not dispute the Imam's assertion, but the speaker at the service that Friday, Ahmed Youssef—an elderly, bespectacled professor at Cairo University, who joined us before the service got under way—did. "Look, what happened in New York is the work of a gangster mentality, but America must learn not to take the side of the aggressor," he said. "I hope America learns from this mistake before it makes another mistake."

In his view, the aggressor is Israel, which signed a peace agreement with Egypt almost twenty-three years ago. This historical fact is not immediately noticeable in Cairo, where the public obsession with Israel is overwhelming. Youssef said that the nineteen terrorists who on September 11th committed mass suicide in the course of committing mass murder engaged in an un-Islamic act. They killed civilians, which is *haram*, or forbidden, and they killed themselves, which is also *haram*. Only against Israel is it permissible to engage in a "martyrdom attack," he said, and this is because it is "only the Jews who kill innocent people." He added, "There are no Israeli civilians, only soldiers, so this is a legitimate tactic."

At this, Sheikh Abdelrazi blanched. "He is not speaking for the mosque," he whispered. The mosque, like all mosques in Egypt, ostensibly comes under the supervision of the government, whose position on suicide attacks against Israeli civilians is ambiguous. When I asked President Hosni Mubarak's chief spokesman, Nabil Osman, if his government condemns such attacks, he would say only, "One cannot condemn these acts without condemning the acts of the occupier."

I asked Sheikh Abdelrazi and Youssef if they believed that the Palestinian cause was the motivating factor in Muhammad Atta's alleged act.

"I don't know what happened in New York," Youssef said. "I don't have the answer."

The mosque's muezzin began calling the faithful to prayer. "God is Greater," he chanted, his voice carried by speakers across Arab League Street, beside the mosque. "I bear witness that there is no God but God. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God."

Some of the men who went to pray asked if I was a man of the Book; Christians and Jews, as monotheists, however flawed, still hold a certain status in Islam, and I was invited to perform the ablutions that would purify me for the prayer service. As we stepped outside to the fountain, where a great number of Muslims were already washing, an old man, sallow-skinned and stooped, moved our way, surrounded by courtiers.

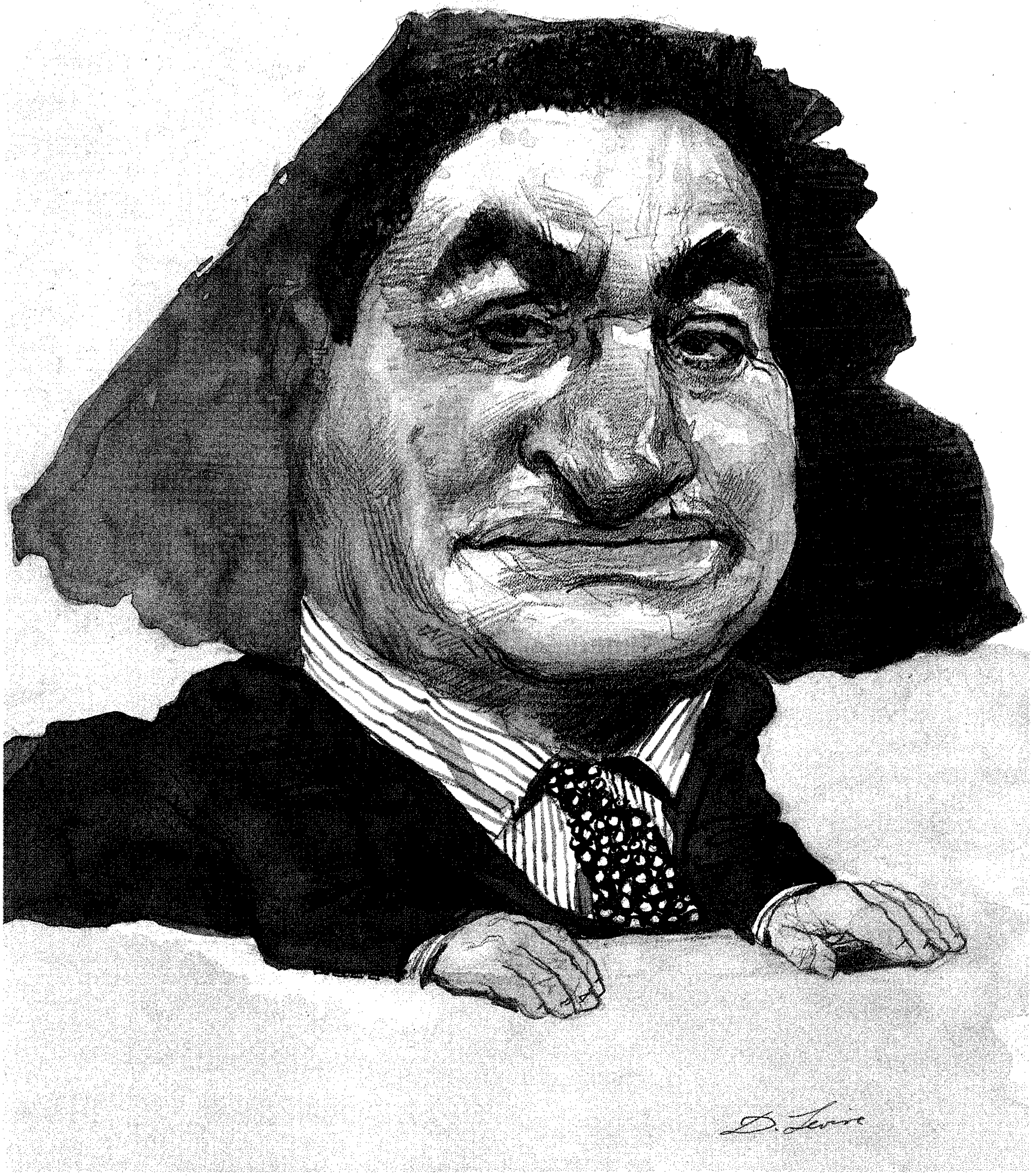
"*He* has the answer," Sheikh Abdelrazi said, pointing to the mosque's founder, Mustafa Mahmoud himself. But Mahmoud hobbled into the mosque; the answer would wait until after prayers.

By now, two thousand or so worshippers had assembled. The Friday service was short, and the sermon lasted only a few minutes. In it, Youssef acknowledged that an injustice had been done in the United States but cautioned America to stay its hand. "Don't say that one should not kill civilians and then kill civilians yourself."

After prayer, Youssef found me and gave his interpretation of the differing outlooks of Christianity and Islam.

"In Islam, if I slap your cheek"—he slapped my cheek—"you should slap my other cheek. But in Christianity, Jesus says turn the other cheek. The U.S. is Christian, so why doesn't it turn the other cheek?"

The discussion was curtailed by the announcement that Mustafa Mahmoud was ready to meet with me. I made my way to an austere office where Mah-



President Hosni Mubarak faces a threat from the radicals, but what message has the government press been sending?

DAVID LEVINE

moud, who is eighty, was already sitting. "I understand you want the answer," Mahmoud said.

I said yes.

"Waco," he said. At my silent surprise, he went on, "The Branch Davidians attacked the World Trade Center, the McVeigh people. The Mossad gave them help. Did you know that the Israelis who work at the World Trade Center were told to stay home that day?"

He had learned this, he said, from research on the Internet.

"It is impossible for Osama bin Laden to do this," Mahmoud continued. "No Arab could have done this."

For moral reasons? I asked.

"No!" he said. "For technical reasons. Arabs are always late! They aren't coördinated enough to do this, all at once on four airplanes. What does Osama bin Laden know about American air travel, anyway? He lives in Afghanistan."

Mustafa Mahmoud is not a marginal figure in Egyptian society. He is an eminent surgeon and onetime Marxist who found religion; his popular television show, "Science and Faith," explores the connections between religion and reason; a charitable organization that bears his name runs several clinics and hospitals in Cairo, including an eye institute that is reputed to be one of the most advanced in the Middle East.

Mahmoud told me that he is not sorry about the destruction of the World Trade Center. "Even Rome was a great empire once," he said. "This was an attack on American arrogance."

He said I could read more about his beliefs in a newspaper column that would appear the next day. In addition to his other achievements, Mahmoud regularly contributes articles to *Al-Ahram*, which is the largest and most respected daily newspaper in Egypt.

I later found, on the Internet, a translation of one of Mahmoud's columns, from late June. Its headline was "ISRAEL—THE PLAGUE OF OUR TIME AND A TERRORIST STATE." Much of the column is taken up with a recounting of the main points of the notorious turn-of-the-century tsarist forgery "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." "What exactly do the Jews want?" he wrote on June 23rd. "Read what the Ninth Protocol of 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' says: 'We have limitless ambitions, inexhaustible greed, merciless vengeance and hatred beyond imagination. We are a secret army whose plans are impossible to understand by using honest methods.' "

The image of Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin joyously clasping hands with Jimmy Carter at the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace accord is indelible but misleading, because it did not herald a true peace between two peoples. It has been a cold peace, particularly on the Egyptian side. Israelis have visited Egypt by the thousands, but the Egyptian government has long discouraged its citizens from visiting Israel or doing business with Israelis. And since the latest outbreak of the Palestinian uprising, a year ago, and the attendant photographs of Israeli soldiers firing on Palestinian rock throwers, the relationship has turned frigid. Mubarak supports the peace treaty signed by his predecessor, Sadat—an American-aid package of two billion dollars a year fairly demands this of him—but he has discouraged the normalization of relations between the two states.

It is in the domain of the press that Mubarak's position is most evident. *Al-Ahram* is often described in the American press as a "semi-official" daily newspaper, but this may be an understatement. Its editor, two government officials told me, is chosen by President Mubarak, who also chooses the editors of other government newspapers and magazines. Even supposedly independent or opposition newspapers are said never to criticize the President. The one area in which they are given especially wide latitude is in criticizing Israel and, to a lesser extent, America.

"Our marriage is undergoing something of a renaissance."

One day last week, I visited the offices of the newspaper *Al-Usbu*, an independent weekly that is distinctly anti-Israel and critical of ministers in the Mubarak government—though not, of course, of Mubarak himself. Its editor, Mustafa Bakri, who is in his forties, was in his office, watching Al-Jazeera, the Pan-Arabic cable channel. He was impeccably dressed, polite and deferential. I had wanted to meet him for some time, ever since I read a translation of a column in which he described a dream. The dream began with his appointment as one of Ariel Sharon's bodyguards, assigned to protect the Israeli Prime Minister at Cairo's airport, and in the column, which appeared in February, he wrote:

> The pig landed; his face was diabolical, a murderer; his hands soiled with the blood of women and children. A criminal who should be executed in the town square. Should I remain silent as many others did? Should I guard this butcher on my homeland's soil? All of a sudden, I forgot everything: the past and the future, my wife and my children and I decided to do it. I pulled my gun and aimed it at the cowardly pig's head. I emptied all the bullets and screamed. . . . The murderer collapsed under my feet. I breathed a sigh of relief. I realized the meaning of virility, and of self-sacrifice. The criminal died. I stepped on the pig's head with my shoes and screamed from the bottom of my heart: Long live Egypt, long live Palestine, Jerusalem will never die and never will the honor of the nation be lost.

Bakri offered me an orange soda, and talked of the attack on the World Trade Center. He spoke in terms that, in the current shorthand, are considered Nasserist, after Gamal Abdel Nasser, the revolutionary leader and Egypt's first President. Nasserism today combines populism, Pan-Arab socialism, and opposition to all relations with Israel. Nasserists also resent American economic influence.

"The new globalists want to impose American thinking on the Arabs," Bakri said. "This is a reaction to their thinking." Bakri blamed the September 11th attacks on the American right wing, with help from the Mossad. "Five Israelis were arrested the day before the attack outside the World Trade Center for taking pictures," he said, and added that he knew this from reading American newspapers. If America responds militarily to the attacks, he continued, "American targets will be legitimate targets of Arab anger."

I also went to the offices of *Al-Ahram* to talk about this phenomenon. I met with Abdel Monem Said Aly, the director of the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, a respected moderate think tank attached to the newspaper. I asked him about the many anti-Israel and anti-American articles published in the official Egyptian press in the year leading up to the terror attacks. He himself has not disseminated anti-American ideas, and has fought the spread of conspiracy theories in Egyptian life.

"We have anti-Semitic papers and fanatics, yes, but these are garbage magazines," he said. "*Al-Ahram, Al-Akhbar,* these are very moderate newspapers. Sometimes they are highly critical of the U.S., but that does not mean that they're anti-American."

Nevertheless, *Al-Akhbar* this year has run opinion pieces defending Hitler. I found one of them translated on the Web site of the Middle East Media Research Institute, a watchdog organization based in Washington. "Thanks to Hitler, of blessed memory, who on behalf of the Palestinians took revenge in advance, against the most vile criminals on the face of the Earth," the *Al-Akhbar* columnist Ahmad Ragab wrote in April. "Although we do have a complaint against him, for his revenge was not enough."

Holocaust denial is a regular feature of *Al-Gomhuriya*, another government daily. Its deputy chief editor, Lotfi Nasif, sat with me in his windowless office in downtown Cairo last week and explained that the Holocaust is "an exaggeration" and that gas chambers are a product of the "Jewish imagination." He told me, "The crimes of the Zionists against the Palestinians far outweigh any of the crimes committed by the Nazis."

Colin Powell has frequently been denounced in the government press, sometimes in racial terms, and, shortly before the attacks in New York and in Washington, the *Al-Akhbar* columnist Mahmoud Abd Al-Munim Murad wrote, "The Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor must be destroyed because of . . . the idiotic American policy that goes from disgrace to disgrace in the swamp of bias and blind fanaticism." He also declared that "the age of the American collapse has begun." This is a not uncommon theme among members of the Egyptian intellectual class.

On one subject of international controversy—the use of suicide bombers against Israel—there is near unanimity: despite slight shades of difference, as seen at the Mustafa Mahmoud Mosque, most people agree that it is sometimes allowable. Some Islamic moderates believe that suicide attacks are doctrinally permissible only against Israeli soldiers; a more extremist position holds that all Israelis are legitimate targets.

Before September 11th, American officials who worked closely with Egypt tried to downplay the role of anti-Israel and anti-American incitement in the local press. One of the few incidents that provoked a public American response came in 1998, when the newly appointed American Ambassador in Cairo, an Orthodox Jew named Daniel Kurtzer (who is now the Ambassador to Israel), was attacked in anti-Semitic terms in the Egyptian press.

Dennis Ross, who guided Middle East policy under the first Bush Administration and was the chief Middle East negotiator for Bill Clinton, told me last week that he and others had underestimated the influence that the press and the imams had in creating a climate hostile to Israel and America.

"The media have been a kind of safety valve to release tensions, and you could even say that a safety valve is a legitimate way to approach such problems," Ross, who is now a distinguished fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said. "But in doing so they appeased extremist sentiments rather than countering them. A climate has been created in which the practice of suicide attacks has come to be seen as legitimate. I'm concerned that there are those who say that if it's O.K. against Israelis, then it's O.K. against Americans."

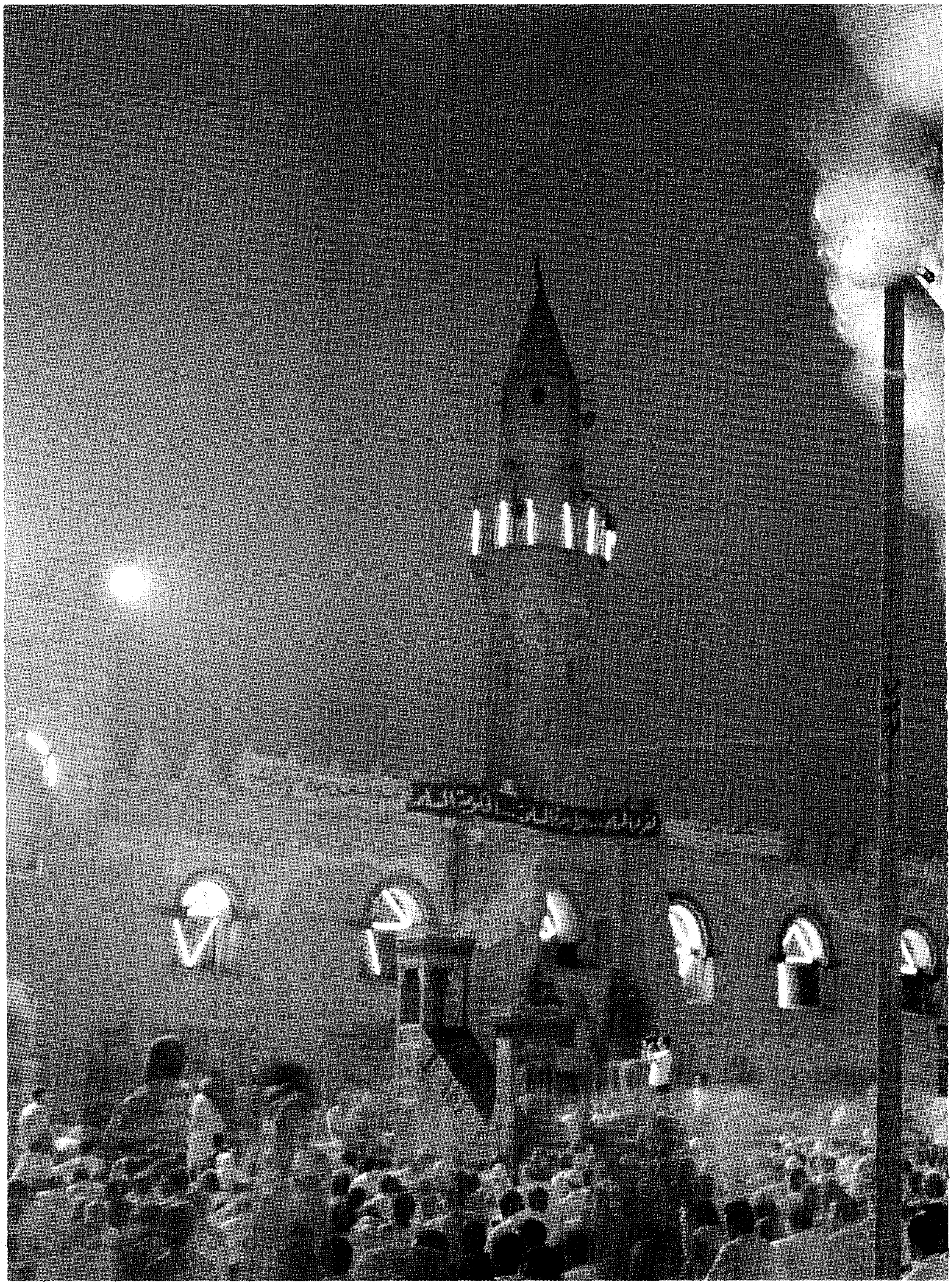
When I summarized Ross's view to Muhammad El-Sayed Said, the deputy director of the Al-Ahram Center, he blamed Ross for the failure of the peace process. "Dennis Ross is behind it all," Said said. "The Americans should be blamed for the disaster we are in," he continued, referring to the collapsed peace process, and, indirectly, to the terror attacks on the United States. "There's an ambivalence about the World Trade Center. I saw so many people crying when they heard the news, but the other side of it is that many Egyptians saw this as a useful blow against American arrogance. The sense is that it will help the Americans learn that they, too, are vulnerable. That they are paying a price for their total support for Israel."

Egyptian political élites, unlike the makers of street opinion, do not suggest that Israel, either alone or in concert with American extremists, carried out the attacks, but they blame Israel for creating an atmosphere of despair which leads to terrorism.

Last Tuesday, I met with Amr Moussa, the secretary-general of the Arab League, which is housed in a palatial building on Tahrir Square, in the center of Cairo. Before being appointed secretary-general, Moussa served as President Mubarak's Foreign Minister. He is known as an outspoken critic of Israel. Moussa is a dapper man who, like many veteran diplomats, can speak at great length without giving much away. He said first that he hoped the World Trade Center would be rebuilt; then he outlined the current thinking of the Mubarak regime.

"There is a wide menu of coöperation," he said. "Countries will choose the areas where they can do best. All of us will fight terrorism, confront terrorism, but not necessarily by conducting a military campaign."

Moussa said that the World Trade Center attack should provide the impetus for America to "reassess" its Middle East alliances. "When it comes to the crunch, such as the Persian Gulf War, ten years ago, or the situation today, America has to sideline Israel," he said. "If Israel intervened on the side of America, it would be destructive to any coalition against terrorism." Many Arab governments have stated that they will not participate in a coalition in which Israel plays a part, and the Bush Adminis-



A religious celebration led by the Muslim Brotherhood, a movement that has advocated the Islamization of Egyptian society for decad

day, its status is said to be "illegal, but tolerated." Photograph by Robert Lyons.

tration has agreed. Moussa said that Israeli behavior in the occupied territories is contributing to instability and unease throughout the Muslim world.

Last October, during a visit here to attend an Arab summit on the Palestinian uprising, I spent a morning with a Muslim cleric named Muhammad Sayed Tantawi. Tantawi is the highest-ranking cleric in Egypt, and an influential figure across the Sunni Islamic world. I met him in his office near Al-Azhar University, the venerable Muslim theological center, which he oversees. Tantawi is known as the Sheikh of Al-Azhar.

Tantawi was appointed by Mubarak, whose official photograph hangs in Tantawi's office. Sheikh Tantawi usually has taken the side of Islamic moderation and believes in interfaith dialogue, but he also supports the development of an Arab nuclear weapon. Last October, the Palestinian uprising was in its infancy; there had not been a wave of suicide bombings since 1997. But in the interview Tantawi forcefully addressed the issue of jihad. "If someone takes something from you by force, it is your right to take it back by force," he said. "This is a requirement of Islam. If the Israelis would stop transgressing Muslim land, then there no longer would be a requirement to rise up and fight them."

I asked if Muslims were forbidden by Islamic law to engage in specific acts of retribution. "The killing of civilians is always wrong," he said. "Women, children. This is abhorrent to Islam."

Tantawi has since endorsed some suicide attacks against soldiers. In an interview earlier this year, he said, "The Palestinian youth who bomb themselves among people who fight against them are considered martyrs." Last week, though, he would not talk about suicide attacks. When I spoke to him briefly outside his office, he said only that he was sorry for the attacks on America, and he approved the notion of an international conference on terrorism. I noticed that he moved with a serious-looking security detail; men with submachine guns hanging under their jackets shadowed him through the building.

I asked one of Sheikh Tantawi's aides if there had been a specific threat against the Sheikh's life. No, he said, but added, "Egyptians are the victims of terrorism as well." He was referring to the antigovernment campaigns of the nineteen-nineties, in which terrorists operated on behalf of two fundamentalist Muslim groups: the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Gama'a al-Islamiya. In this wave of terror, Egyptians and foreign tourists alike were murdered in a brutal campaign to convert Egypt into an Islamic state. Fundamentalists killed President Sadat in October of 1981, and they have tried to kill Mubarak as well. But the security around Tantawi suggests that they might want to kill him, too—and they could find, in a liberal interpretation of Tantawi's ruling favoring suicide attacks against "oppressors," a new and devastatating way to carry out their vision.

From an Islamic theological perspective, perhaps the most significant suicide attack to have taken place in the last two weeks occurred on September 9th, in northern Afghanistan. Two men suspected to be operating under the command of Osama bin Laden blew themselves up along with the leader of the Afghan opposition, Ahmed Shah Massoud. It is one thing for Muslim extremists to martyr themselves while attacking infidels; it is quite another for them to begin defining religious Muslims such as Massoud as infidels. Even among the Islamic Jihad and Hamas clerics of the Gaza Strip, I never heard anyone justify the use of suicide bombers against Muslim targets.

For some fundamentalists, the Massoud murder seemed to have significantly shifted the boundaries of what is considered permissible. Some Islamic scholars, including those under Sheikh Tantawi's supervision at Al-Azhar, have argued that, if one could attack Israelis, one could also attack anyone who stands in the way of their vision of what the world should look like.

To better understand the thinking of Muslims who have killed fellow-Muslims in holy war, I went to see Montasser al-Zayyat, the spokesman of the Gama'a al-Islamiya, which is the larger of Egypt's two fundamentalist terrorist groups. He is a lawyer and has represented, among others, his organization's spiritual leader, Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who is in prison in America for plotting to blow up a number of New York landmarks, including the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels, the Empire State Building, and the United Nations.

When I arrived at a decrepit building in downtown Cairo, where al-Zayyat has his office, it was 9 P.M., and in his waiting room were several bearded men who were seeking an audience with him. They were noticeably hostile toward me, but I could not tell if they were upset by the presence of an American or by the fact that the American was jumping the line.

Al-Zayyat himself, a heavy featured, bearded man, was friendly, but, in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks, he was evasive. At a press conference in Cairo earlier this year, he had warned, "The U.S. will reap a bitter harvest if it continues humiliating Dr. Omar"—Sheikh Rahman. "The continuation of the Sheikh's abuse may result in an explosion of events targeted against U.S. interests. Sheikh Omar has many followers." That night, he said that his threats were not to be taken literally. "I'm very sorry for what happened in New York," he said.

Although Muslim fundamentalists in Egypt have been less visible since President Mubarak ordered a crackdown in the mid-nineties, they have been especially discreet over the last two weeks. The Gama'a al-Islamiya declared a ceasefire in 1999, but thousands of its members remain in jail. Like its rival, the ideologically similar Islamic Jihad, the Gama'a grew out of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which for decades has been advocating the Islamization of Egyptian society. Unlike the Gama'a, which is illegal, the Muslim brothers exist in an ambiguous political state described to me by one government official as "illegal but tolerated."

The Egyptian Islamic Jihad is also illegal, and in any case seems to have transferred its operations to Afghanistan and merged with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network, with the help of Jihad's Ayman al-Zawahiri. Though they represent rival organizations, al-Zayyat considers al-Zawahiri a friend.

"He's a very sensible man, a very quiet man," al-Zayyat said, when I asked him to describe al-Zawahiri. "When he speaks, you listen to him carefully."

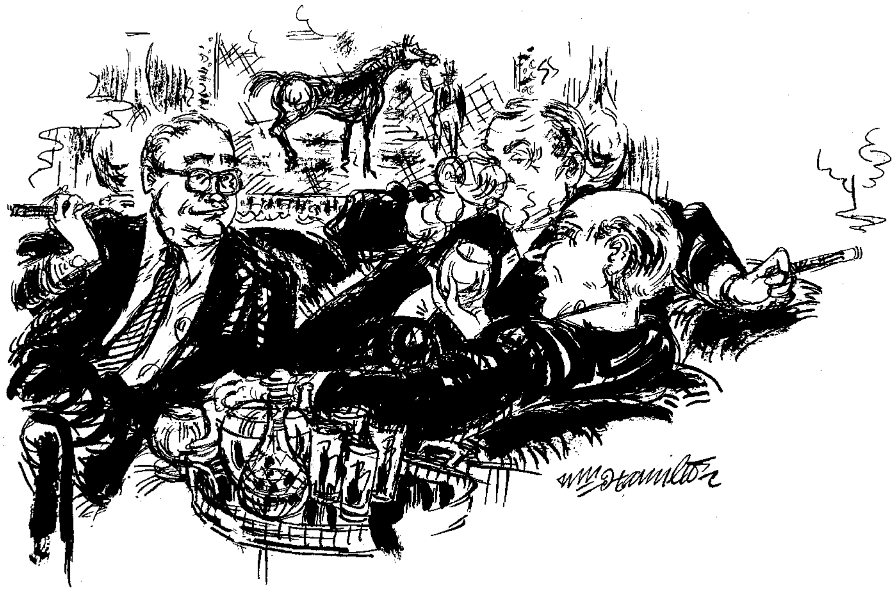
I asked al-Zayyat what might have driven al-Zawahiri to help organize the American attacks. He replied that he had no knowledge of the attacks, and also said, "I'm not going to be a witness against my friend."

I had a final question: What is it about America that incites the fury of so many Islamists? I suggested that it is American values, especially as they relate to sex and the role of women in society, which Islamic conservatives abhor. "We have sex in Egypt," al-Zayyat said, laughing. Then he went on, "We don't have feelings of hatred toward the people of the U.S., but feelings of hatred toward the government of the U.S. have developed because you support Israel so blindly." At that moment, Montasser al-Zayyat's views seemed inseparable from those of Mubarak's spokesmen.

FLAT FIX
AIR
AUTO REPAIR

One evening, I met a friend, a member of the small Egyptian upper class, for drinks in a hotel by the Nile. Cairo isn't Islamabad: Muslims are free to drink alcohol, and there are movie theatres and belly dancing, although the percentage of women wearing traditional headscarves seems to have increased dramatically since I first visited, ten years ago. What people aren't encouraged to do is express interest in democratic reform. My friend asked that I not name him in anything I might write; he believes that the soft despotism of the Mubarak government is hardening, and he wants to stay out of jail. Earlier this year, a prominent sociologist and democracy advocate, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, was sentenced to seven years' hard labor on trumped-up charges, and, like the Egyptian peace camp, the number of those who support true democracy is purposefully shrinking from view.

We spoke about the Egyptian preoccupation with Israel. He is no friend of Israel—"I'm an Arab, how can I have warm feelings for such a place?" he said—but he believes that hatred of Israel, and, to a lesser extent, hatred of



"At least this damn pullback is pulling back lots of money from the wrong hands."

America, is fomented by the Mubarak regime as a diversion; as long as Egyptians think about Palestinians, they aren't thinking about themselves. "Egyptians live in just appalling conditions today," he said.

Per-capita income in Egypt is less than the per-capita income on the West Bank. Cairo is a tumultuous, decaying city with a wealthy élite and great masses of the destitute and the near-destitute. The universities are turning out thousands of graduates each year for whom there are no jobs. "The gap between rich and poor is widening, and what does the government give us? Hatred of the peace process." He ascribes to Mubarak's circle the ability to turn on and off anti-Western rhetoric.

All of this, he went on, is indirectly the fault of America, which gives Egypt two billion dollars a year in aid but demands little in return. "You allow them to manipulate you. Every time anti-American feelings appear here, Mubarak says, 'Support me or else you see what you'll get.' But the suppression and the corruption and the anti-democratic behavior will create much worse fundamentalism over time. Washington never stands up to them." He cited the imprisonment of the democracy advocate Saad Ibrahim, and said, "Look what they just did on the Queen Boat."

The boat in question, a well-known disco that allegedly attracted a gay clientele, was anchored a short distance from where we sat. ("Queen" is thought to refer to the wife of the deposed King Farouk.) Following a police raid of the vessel in May, fifty-three men were arrested for presumed homosexuality; these men are now on trial in Cairo. Two weeks ago, the first sentence was handed down: a seventeen-year-old received three years' hard labor.

"What does the U.S. do about this? Nothing," my friend said. The only prescription is the robust export of democratic values. "There's no Cold War anymore. You can't drive him into an alliance with the Soviets."

There are few Egyptian intellectuals who still argue publicly in favor of normalization with Jerusalem. They are despised, and for the most part quiet. One of them is Ali Salem, a playwright recently expelled from the Egyptian Writers' Union for making frequent visits to Israel and for assuming a pro-normalization stance.

I wanted to ask Salem, who is sixty-five years old and looks like the literary critic Harold Bloom, what had happened, but he said that he was interested in talking about "something deeper than that." We sat in a cafeteria not far from the Mahmoud mosque. Salem drank coffee and chain-smoked Marlboros. "History is cruel," he said. "It is trying to drag America backward. But I think in this case history is right."

He explained, "We here need to be more progressive, but you need to take a step back. If the bureaucrats in your airports were just a little more paranoid, like us, it would be a different world. Really, America is a beautiful place: no one even asked why all these guys wanted flying lessons. You should learn to be suspicious. A little backwardness would be healthy."

I asked him to identify the cause of the attacks on America.

"People say that Americans are arrogant, but it's not true," he said. "Americans enjoy life and they are proud of their lives, and they are boastful of their wonderful inventions that have made life so much easier and more convenient. It's very difficult to understand the machinery of hatred, because you wind up resorting to logic, but trying to understand this with logic is like measuring distance in kilograms. These are people who are afraid of America, afraid of life itself. . . . These are people who are envious. To them, life is an unbearable burden. Modernism is the only way out. But modernism is frightening. It means we have to compete. It means we can't explain everything away with conspiracy theories."

Ali Salem paused to order another cup of coffee.

"Bernard Shaw said it best, you know. In the preface to 'St. Joan,' he said Joan of Arc was burned not for any reason except that she was talented. Talent gives rise to jealousy in the hearts of the untalented."

Soon after seeing Ali Salem, I ran into Muhammad Atta's father, Muhammad al-Amir Atta, outside a downtown Cairo hotel. He was agitated, alternately aggressive and disconsolate. He had spent much of the week defending himself to reporters and defending his son. I asked him the same question: What, in his mind, lay behind the attack on the World Trade Center?

"The Mossad kidnapped my son and stole his papers," he told me. "Then they spread those papers out at the World Trade Center in order to make it seem like he did it." ♦

OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

FIVE FISH

Time spent on rivers.

BY IAN FRAZIER

I.

When we first moved to Montana, I sometimes took my daughter fishing with me. Cora was only six years old, but she liked exploring in the woods, and I thought she might find fishing interesting. As I cast, she stood on the bank and watched. Once, she found a grasshopper fly I'd lost, snagged on a log. Sometimes she asked questions, or told me when she saw a fish jump. After an hour or so of dispassionate observation, she would announce that she wanted to go home.

On a trip to New York City at about that time, she got sick, and her mother and I took her to her former pediatrician in Manhattan. The doctor, making conversation, asked Cora how she liked Montana. Cora said she liked it. The doctor asked her what she did for fun in Montana, and Cora said she went fishing with her daddy sometimes. The doctor asked her what kind of fish she and her daddy caught. "Oh," Cora said reprovingly, "we *never* catch anything."

In Missoula in early fall, the sky is a bright blue tinted with dust and car exhaust. The maples along the city streets and the cottonwoods in the river bottoms turn yellow, and as you walk among them each leaf is another small variation on that single ubiquitous yellow shade. Then, sometimes in just a couple of days, all the leaves fall, and the yellow that was at tree height moves to the ground. In early fall, the weather is usually calm, the nights cool, and the rivers clear.

On a fall afternoon not long after we'd moved, I took my wife and kids out to the Bitterroot River. Self-denyingly, I didn't fish; I thought instead I would fool around the bank and the shallows with the kids. Thomas, who was two, stood on a little gravel beach beneath a willow and threw stones into the water. Boys of that age, and some girls, can throw stones into water for an unlimited amount of time. My wife dangled her feet by him while Cora and I went off into some brambly shoreline underbrush. There were many vines, and she was the right size to scoot through them. Floodwater the previous spring had left a lot of sticks in heaps in the lower tree branches. Cora said they looked like a bunch of cockroach legs jumbled together. Far back in the thicket we found a bird's nest made entirely of pieces of the thinnest tendrils of the vines.

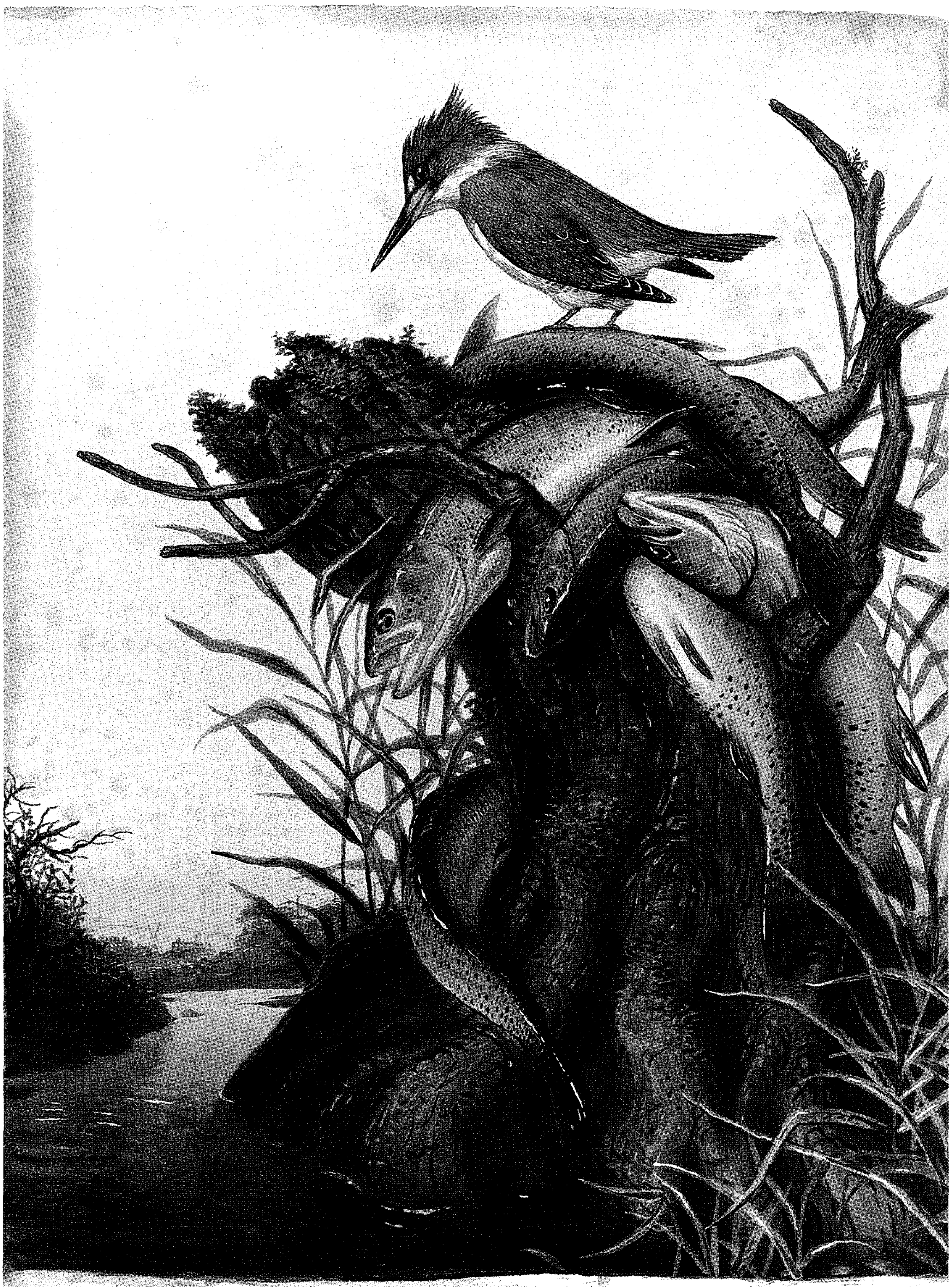
Near where Thomas was playing was a level, grassy stretch of bank just a few inches above the water. You could lie there with your face tip-of-the-nose close to the surface of the river flowing by. I did that for a while. I'd been having almost no luck fishing recently and couldn't understand why. Lying there, I observed the passing insect life, an irregular flotilla made up mostly of tiny mayflies. Some were duns, recently hatched and not yet able to fly, with damp, crumpled wings. They rode with their all but invisible legs pinching down the surface film like a person standing on a trampoline. Sometimes they fluttered their wings and tried to fly away, and sometimes they succeeded, becoming airborne in erratic, low-altitude courses. Others of the mayflies were spinners—insects in the adult phase, whose mating and egg-laying flights had ended up, as many do, in the river. These were spent insects, not destined to fly away, affixed to the surface by their flat wings and writhing their small black thoraxes ineffectually. They were tiny, but not so tiny that I couldn't imagine imitating them with an artificial. A few fish were hitting the surface—feeding on them, I was sure.

The kids waded, splashed, got wet, and soon were ready to leave. We walked to the car, and I took everybody home. In a second, I dropped them off, made a plea to my wife, picked up my gear, and headed back to the river. The afternoon had become winy and halcyon, with maple samaras helicoptering on the diagonal through the declining light. Suddenly, I was in a near-panic of haste, afraid that someone would get to my favorite spot before I did. This spot existed, as far as I know, only that one year; floods the following spring straightened the shoreline and washed it away. It was a deep eddy at a bend where the river had piled up a quarter acre of bleached driftwood. Cora called it the tree dump. The biggest drift log in it was a monster of a cottonwood, completely without bark, that jutted out into the eddy on the downstream side. Standing on the log, an angler would be three feet above the water. The eddy turned with long swirls of insects and cottonwood catkins clustering on its surface in shapes like the Nike symbol. The water in the eddy was dark and fathomless, and when I waded in it sometimes I got too close to the really deep part, where the bottom angled off beneath my feet. Lots of big fish lived there, and came out to feed nearby.

I parked at a pullout by the river and put on my waders, hands shaking with angling fever. Three or four cars were there already. I hurried down the shoreline trail, breaking into a jog, maneuvering my fishing rod among the brush. Through the leaves I saw the bleached expanse of the tree dump. I ducked under an alder branch and stepped out onto the driftwood. Success—nobody fishing there! Hopping from log to log, I made my way to the water. I stood at the edge and rigged my rod, keeping one eye on the eddy.

Fish were rising everywhere. You had to look closely to see them, because the rises were small and the currents brisk and many. A half-dozen fish—all of them big, probably—had taken the best feeding lanes, at the far side of the eddy, where it adjoined the main current of the river. Past experience had taught me that they would be beyond casting range. Other fish were rising in the eddy's swirls, some in current lanes that were actually going

WALTON FORD



The Belted Kingfisher or Halcyon – Megaceryle alcyon upstream as the eddy turned. Those would be hard to reach, too, because the fly would have so little time to sit on the surface before the conflicting currents snatched the leader and caused the fly to drag. I tied on a plausible imitation—a size-18 Blue-Winged Olive, like the newly hatched duns I'd observed earlier in the day. Wading in carefully, I began to cast.

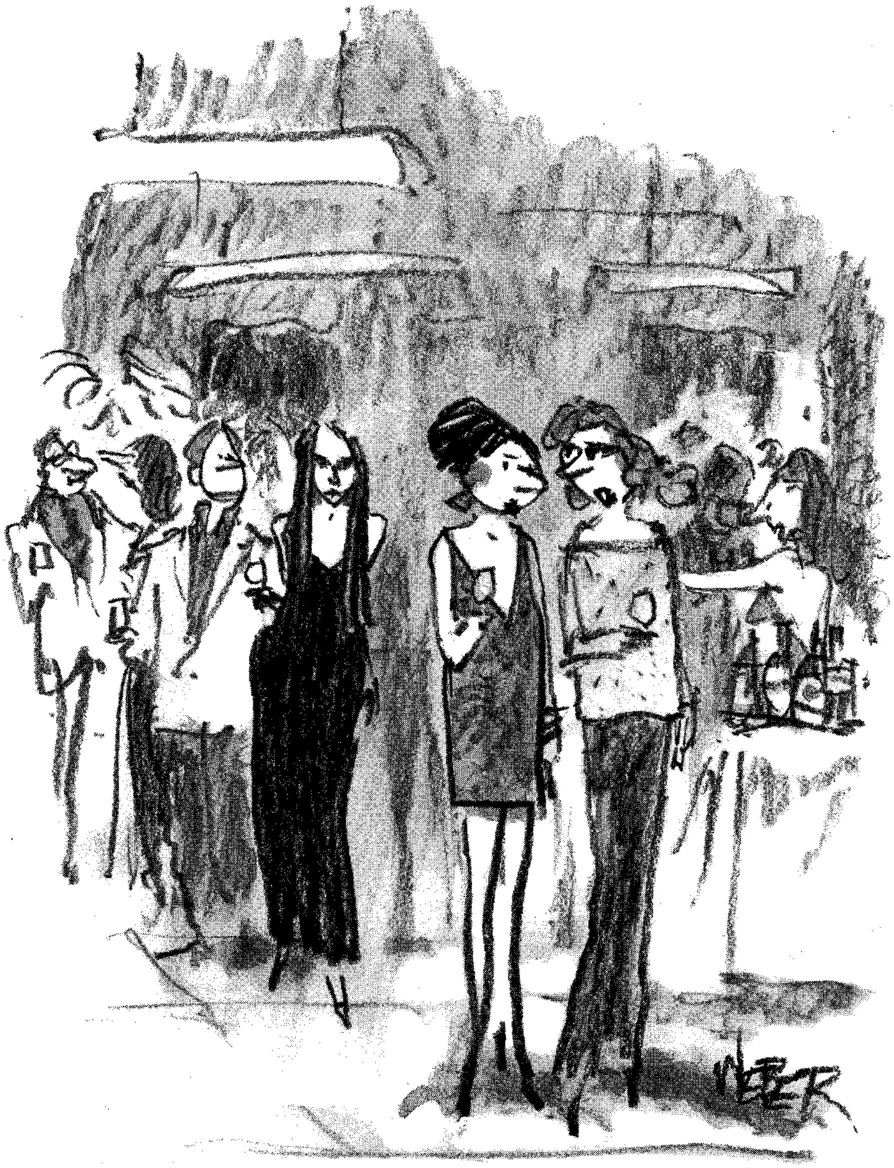
And then nothing. Every time I fished, this seemed to happen. I did everything right, in my view, and got no response at all. I cast again, and again nothing. Nothing and nothing. This is a part of fly-fishing that can drive you insane—the stubborn, inexplicable, blank nothing. Fish kept rising without noticing me. Normally, I would fall into a gloomy frame of mind at this point, but somehow on this day I maintained an alert, lucky, improvisatory feeling. A guy in a tackle store in Missoula whom I had told about my recent lack of success advised me to fish with longer, finer leaders. He said that he fished with leaders sixteen feet long. I decided to make a radical change. I quit casting, cut off the fly, and made my leader twice as long. I tied on three feet of 5x tippet, three feet of 6x, and two feet of 7x, fine as hair, at the leader's end.

To the 7x leader, straining my eyes, I tied a little fly with white Mylar wings and a black body; it looked a lot like the spinners I'd seen. These little mayflies are called *Tricorythodes*—"tricos," for short. They're especially abundant in the fall. Now the leader was so ephemeral and the fly so small that I wasn't sure I was casting at all, but I waded back in and laid leader and fly on the eddy's currents, I couldn't see exactly where. When I went to pick up the line to cast again, I found it was attached to a good fish. The rod suddenly bent in a deep bow, the fish gave a short, sharp tug, and the 7x leader snapped.

No failure this encouraging had happened to me on the river in weeks. Sure now that I had the right leader and the right fly, I tied on another trico spinner with black body and white Mylar wings. First, I cut off the hair-fine 7x tippet—I have never caught a fish of any size on a 7x tippet, though I know it can be done—and instead used the length of 6x tippet as the leader's end. Tying leader to fly was again a challenge to the eyes; finally I did it, fitting the hook over the edge of my left thumbnail to pull the knot tight.

Again I studied the eddy. The fish were still rising. I began to cast, and I may have had a strike or two, but the circumstances of the light, the bright-yellow reflection of the trees on the far bank, made it impossible to observe the tiny fly as it floated. A few yards upstream from the eddy, very near the bank, fish were rising in a more straightforward current pattern in not difficult casting range. Even better, the surface reflection there was not yellow-gold leaves but only the mild-blue eastern sky. I moved up and laid the fly on a fish that was rising regularly with little saucer-shaped sipping rises. The fly drifted over him four or five times with no response. I cast beyond him for a while, aiming for a fish farther upstream. I recalled that, when I had tried here before, all the fish did that typical trout thing of continuing to rise while sidling in a leisurely manner out of casting range. Now, however, they were staying put.

The closer fish, no more than twenty feet away, was still rising to the trico spinners. I put the fly over him again and—*sploop!*—he rose, I set the hook, and the line came tight. Immediately, the fish turned downstream out of his lie with a good-sized shouldering wake. Wincing, I waited for the leader to part. Sometimes when I'm afraid I'll lose a fish I pull too hard, hoping to get him to the surface so I can at least see him before he breaks off. Now I let line out as the fish made strong downward runs to one side and then the other in the deepest part of the eddy. Still I had not caught a glimpse of him, and my desire to see him was like greed. I had my net in my left hand; many uncertain minutes passed with the



"Don't look now, but a fast-moving cold front is headed our way."

fish down deep, refusing to budge. Then I saw a gleam of white as the fish rolled near the surface. I backed toward the shore and led him into the shallows. At my feet, he veered away again. Finally, I scooped him with the net and walked all the way out of the water, to a muddy piece of bank among some bushes upstream. He was a beautiful heavy rainbow, about seventeen inches long—the biggest fish I had ever caught on such a tiny fly.

I laid the fish, still in the net, on a shoreline rock and whacked his head with another rock. There was that moment when the eyes went dull. Then I unhooked the fish and took it from the net and held it up and said a prayer, exalted. Killing one good fish is enough for me. I drove home and cleaned the trout and sautéed it carefully, and my wife and I ate it for dinner, leaving the bones as clean as an exhibit in an ichthyology museum.

2.

One reason I moved to Missoula was an article in the *Missoulian* newspaper which my friend Bryan sent to me. It was about fly-fishing for whitefish in local rivers in the middle of winter. The accompanying photograph showed Daryl Gadbow, the article's author, standing in a wide expanse of river and unfurling a long, looping cast over pewter-colored water while snowflakes came down all around. I looked at that photograph many times. The fishing regulations in Montana let you catch and keep certain species, including whitefish, all winter long. I had never fly-fished in winter. Fly-fishing on a snowy afternoon seemed like a luxurious winter pastime.

Not long after we got to Missoula, I met Daryl himself. (I had met him once before; as it happens, he is Bryan's brother-in-law.) Daryl writes about fishing and other outdoor subjects for the *Missoulian*. He grew up in Missoula and remembers as a boy hunting for pheasants in fields where Target and Barnes & Noble stores now sprawl. His adventures are well known around town. Once, in the mountains, he was chased up a tree by a grizzly bear. While hunting on a nearby Indian reservation, he came upon the body of a dead man. He spends many days on the water all year round. When he and I met at parties, we talked about fishing at lengths that caused people to roll their eyes and edge away. I told him that I had admired his article about winter fishing for whitefish, and that it was partly why I moved here. Daryl said that some winter day he would take me along.

Our second winter, it really snowed. That part of the country is arid, and when snow comes it is often drier and lighter than snow back East, falling in a fine powder that piles up almost weightlessly. On windless days, it accumulated in the links of the chain-link fence around the playground at my daughter's elementary school, filling the lower half of each link with a triangle of white. On Christmas Eve day and Christmas Eve, thirty inches of snow fell. It buried the lights on people's shrubs; you could see them glowing through the snow. At night, by porchlight against the black sky, I followed the courses of individual flakes coming down. Some fell almost plumb straight, some descended in clockwise or counterclockwise spirals, and some meandered back and forth among the other snowflakes as if lost. The air never got terribly cold; ice lined the edges of the rivers, but from bank to bank the water did not freeze. Framed with white, the rivers took on a coppery sheen, like car windows made of privacy glass.

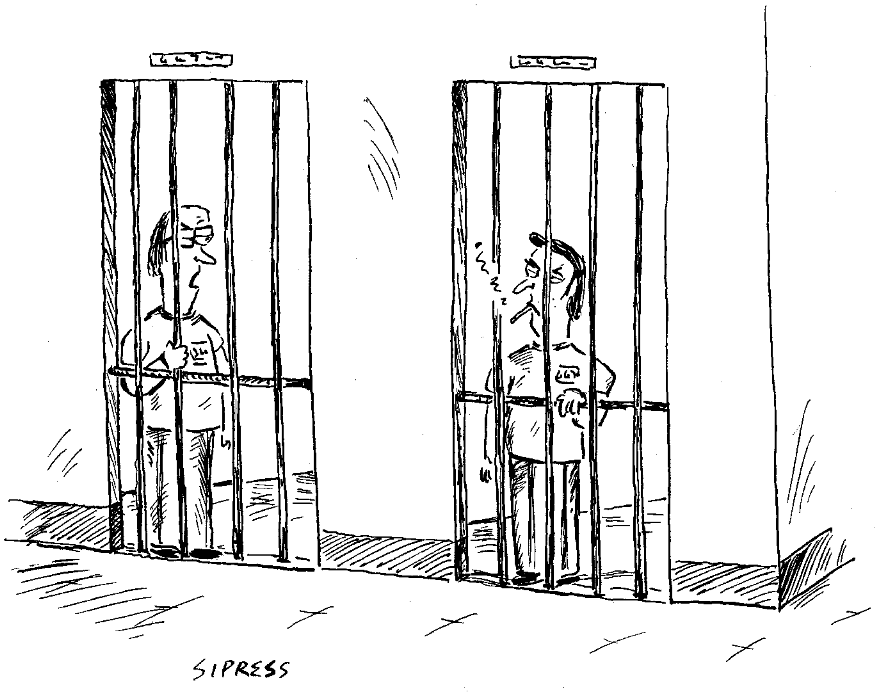
One Sunday afternoon, Daryl called me up, and we grabbed our gear and went. He drove to a spot on the Bitterroot in the town of Lolo, about ten miles upstream. We followed narrow streets with high snow berms in a neighborhood of one-story ranch-style houses, and we parked in a plowed-out turnaround at a dead end. Daryl's dog Rima jumped out and began to play, pouncing and feinting and throwing new-fallen snow in the air with her nose. Sitting on the truck's tailgate, we pulled on our waders and strung our rods. As we crossed the rocky floodplain on the way down to the river's edge, the drifts came above our knees.

In a landscape blurred and softened by snow, the river seen close up seemed to have an extra clarity, the stones on its bottom distinct and precise, like the one in-focus part of a fuzzy photograph. Daryl stationed me at a knee-deep riffle where he said there were lots of whitefish, while he and Rima moved just upstream. I tied on a seven-foot-long leader and a pheasant-tail nymph with a brass bead at the eye of the hook to give it flash and make it sink. About eighteen inches above the fly I added two pieces of lead split shot, biting them onto the leader with my teeth. Casting a weighted rig like that requires a slinging-and-flinging motion I have never quite mastered; the tackle went whistling close to my ear. I began to sling it upstream and across, letting it drift back down, trying to feel out with the line the lowest part of the riffle, where I knew the fish to be.

Suddenly, I saw a flicker of white and jerked the rod, and the fish began to run. It fought hard and stayed stubbornly far out in the river; for a few minutes, I thought it might be a trout. When I got it in close, I saw it was indeed a whitefish, with a torpedo-shaped body and silver, fingernail-size scales and a back darkening to mossy green. As I landed it, Rima barked with excitement and jumped at the fish and for a moment locked on point, her nose quivering and needle-straight at the fish lying in my net on the shore. I killed it and put it in the pouch in the back of my fishing vest. Daryl said the best way to eat a whitefish was smoked. I said I would fry it up fresh that night and have it for dinner, just for the sake of experiment.

Storm clouds moved in, and the afternoon light became a wintry gloom. Snow began to fall hard, hissing in the bare branches of the cottonwood trees. The river scenery—bare-rock bluffs, dark-red willows and tawny grasses along the shore—faded like something you see as you're falling asleep. Daryl and I waded in deeper, crossed the river, tried different spots. The water in the Bitterroot actually felt warmer than the melted snow trickling around our ears. My fly line began to make a raspy sound in the line guides as it passed over the edges of ice building up in them. Steam rose from the water and moved in genie-size wisps with the current. For a couple of hours, getting colder, we caught nothing more.

Then I was standing chest deep at a new place we'd driven to some miles downstream. Daryl was near one bank, throwing long, effortless loops of line, keeping more in the air at one time than appeared physically possible, like a juggler's trick. As I watched, one of those casts descended to the water and got its reward: his rod suddenly bent, and far from him the hooked fish jumped. As often happens, I was mysteriously persuaded that I would catch the trout of



"I cloned a guy in Reno. How 'bout yourself?"

• •

my life if only I could get to a part of the river difficult to wade to and far away. In this case, the ideal water seemed to be at the opposite bank, beneath an undercut bluff with snow-covered roots protruding. But as I approached, the bottom shelved off alarmingly and the river came up to the very top of my waders.

Stymied, I stopped and cast from where I was. I had on the same pheasant-tail nymph, with a smaller nymph in a Hare's-Ear pattern tied to the hook on a short length of monofilament for a dropper fly. I flung the line, dispiritedly, and flung again. Not being where I wanted had dimmed my concentration. After fly and dropper sank, I let them drift back to me as I'd been doing all day. Then a fish hit, hooked itself, and began to zip back and forth down deep. I thought it might be big, but then it jumped and flipped over in the air and I saw that it was a battling little trout. I pulled it in and landed it quickly. Before I let it go, I admired the fish lying on its side in the wet brown mesh of my net: a rainbow of about eleven inches, not skinny but rounded and full-bodied. Trout, especially little ones, have a more precise appearance than other fish, somehow—as if they were drawn with a sharper pencil, their details added by a more careful hand. Daryl's fish, the one I saw jump, turned out to be a rainbow of more than twenty inches. It looked impressive even from a distance when he held it up to show before releasing it. The whitefish I kept, which was about fifteen inches, made a satisfactory (though bony) dinner for my wife and me when I cooked it that evening. But the little rainbow I caught is the fish I remember from the day. It fit with the wintry light, the clarity of the river, the shivery air. The strong streak of color on its sides was the exact same red as the backs of my cold, red hands.

3.

My friend Don and I have been fishing together since we were boys. He and I grew up in the same neighborhood in Ohio, and have been friends for forty-five years. Don is now a college professor. He lives in Portland, Oregon—a distance from Missoula, but near enough for us and our families to visit back and forth. Every year, sometimes twice a year, Don drove from Portland to Montana to go fishing with me.

Walking down a dirt road in Ohio with Don, both of us age twelve, on our way to fish for largemouth bass in a swamp pond in Tinker's Creek State Park: nowadays, stuck in the traffic jam or looking out at one, even the possibility of such a childhood seems amazing to me. Or fishing for bass in Argyle Lake State Park, in central Illinois, after Don moved there, he and I casting top-water plugs on the reflection of the sunset sky, plugs named Hula Popper and Jitterbug, excellent bass-getters, which burbled and gurgled on the surface until a sudden popping downsink from below engulfed them, and the hooked fish exploded upward, shaking its head in the air and rattling the lure's metal hardware: again, I'm amazed and daunted by that happiness, and at my not realizing then how great it was.

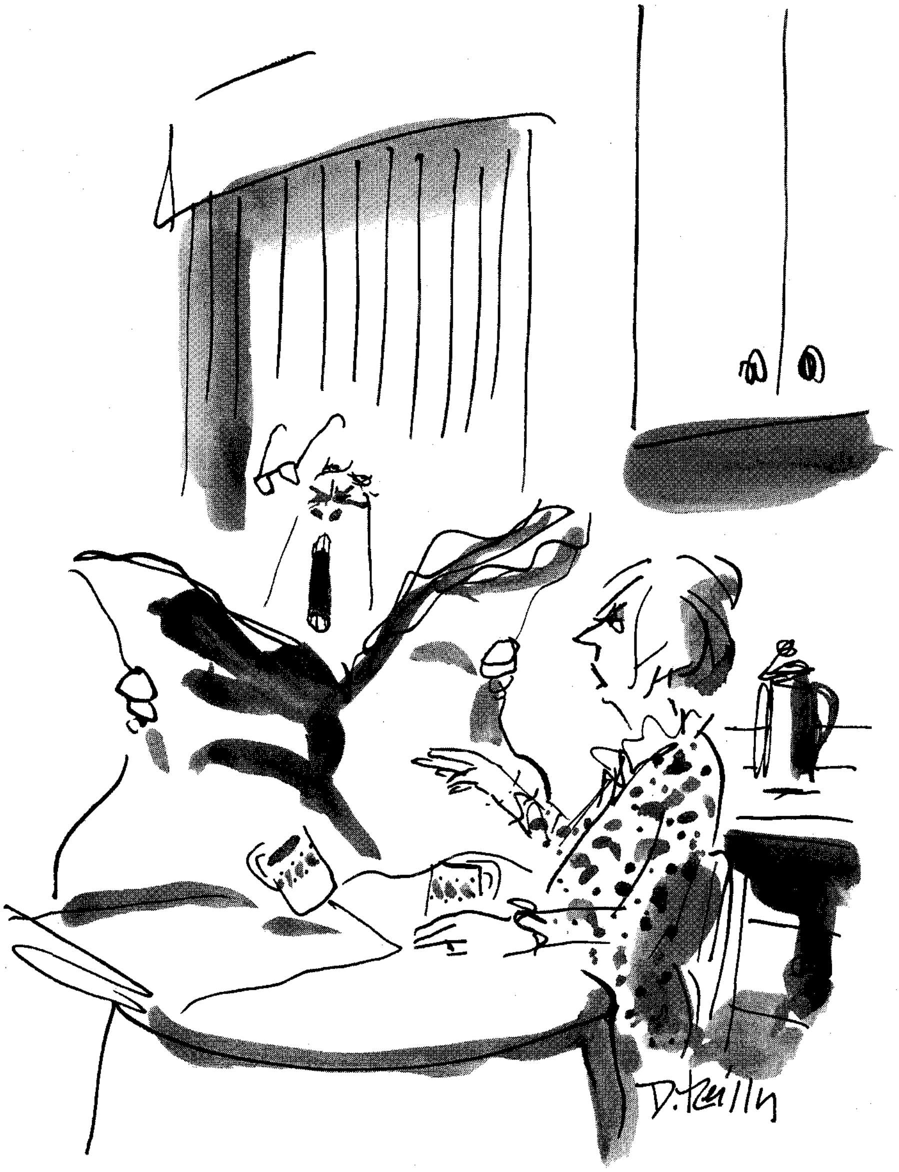
Don has certain things he says. He always has had. Certain ideas or notions or characters he invents occupy his mind, and he plays with them, conjugates and declines them, idles with them as you might idle with a basketball, shooting hoops from various angles and distances against the side of the garage. Indeed, I have seen him play with the latest new idea and shoot hoops like that simultaneously. This idea-play of his beguiles me, and I prefer it to most any comedy I see in movies or on TV, and I repeat his latest invention, and our friends and others sometimes take it up, and it passes, in a small way, into the language. An example? Well, years ago, when he was living in Illinois, he came up with the notion of Huddleston's Mangy Mutts—tick-infested, bladder-problem, mangy, slobbering cur hounds that roamed, according to him, all over the town (Colchester, Illinois), committing various outrages and depredations. Don's disquisitions on the Mangy Mutts often ended with the statement "Someone's—got—to talk—to Pete Huddleston—about—those—DOGS!"

When we were fishing in Montana, Don was in a Generalissimo Beerax phase. Beerax (pronounced *Bee*-rax) was a tyrannical figure of awesome power who commanded a vast all-bee army. Many messages that Don left on my answering machine back then were nothing but an expressive bee-buzzing. Still, on an insect level, I understood them. To my kids, Don sometimes described Beerax and his army in scary detail: "Column after column, rank after rank, wave after *wave* of drone-bee soldiers, their multifaceted, compound eyes perfectly expressionless, their skin hard and chitinous, their long, pointed stingers red hot, their minds filled with only one thought—fanatical loyalty to their commander, Generalissimo Beerax! Day after day, week after week, they pass in review, their marching columns all that can be seen on any TV screen, on any channel, the endless parade interrupted only by news broadcasts reporting yet another victory for Generalissimo Beerax's all-bee armies! You say you want to watch Saturday-morning cartoons? Think again, my young friends! You'll watch nothing but Beerax's drone-bee soldiers, endlessly marching, on every channel! Beerax has a single goal: world domination, along with complete control of the world's precious titanium supplies, and the enslaving of little boys and girls like you who he will turn into flesh slugs and put to work in the titanium mines, far under the earth, where radioactive worms fall on you from the dimly lit ceiling!"

Talking about subjects like Beerax, and the beard of country-and-Western singer Kenny Rogers, and Kenny Rogers's beard lacquer, and on and on, Don and I fished with a dedication seemingly less than hard-core. We were persistent, however. One spring while on sabbatical, Don lived in an apartment in Missoula and took courses at the university. During those months, we fished all the time. Driven by early-season angling fever, we went out in April, when the river was really too swollen with rain and snowmelt. A downpour started; raindrops landed on the olive-colored water, became gray pearls as they hit, skittered everywhere in their gray-pearl form, and vanished. We got drenched and caught nothing, but I found some oyster mushrooms on a log on a midstream island. We took them home and had them for dinner—cut in slices and sautéed.

Once, we happened to be by a bridge over the Bitterroot River forty miles upstream from Missoula when a large early-spring mayfly called the gray drake began to hatch. Fish were rising promiscuously in the deep water underneath the bridge, among the big granite riprap boulders along the shore. Quarters were too cramped for both Don and me to be under the bridge at the same time—to cast, you had to use a vicinity-clearing horizontal motion of the rod, because of the beams close overhead—so I stood back and watched. A heavy fish was rising in a semicircular basin made by two adjoining riprap stones. The range was maybe a dozen feet. Don tied on a Gray Drake, whipped his rod sideways back and forth, cast, missed, missed again, and finally put the fly right on the trout. Because of the light bouncing off the water, he couldn't see the fly, but from where I stood it registered on the glare like a blip on a radar screen. With the smallest of sips, the trout took it under. In the next second, the fish felt the hook, bent the rod double with an emphatic thrash, and popped the fly right off. Desolation and misery.

We lost other big fish, too. Did I secretly not *want* to catch them? More troubling, did I secretly not want Don to? I don't know what to conclude. Once, he and I went to the osprey-nest pool on the Bitterroot just outside the city limits. When we got there, fish were rising in such numbers that I got overexcited and for a while was almost useless. I happened to have the right fly for this particular mayfly, but it took me three tries to tie it onto Don's line. He waded in and cast and immediately hooked me in the shoulder of my vest with his backcast. I unhooked myself and moved upstream, out of the way. He waded into a deep hole we knew about by a brush pile, and a fish rose a rod length away. Don cast and the fish took the fly and made a hat-size bulge in the surface as he sounded. Don's rod doused down, down again almost to the water; and then, oh, the horrid deflation, the dawn-



"You know the doctor told you no more op-ed."

ing self-reproach, when suddenly the rod unbent and the line went slack!

But then one fortunate night—it had to come—later in the year, almost at the end of summer, when Don was in Missoula with his family, he and I went to a place on the Bitterroot which I'd been trying for weeks. It was a long, deep, straight stretch with a high riprap bank and plenty of room to cast. We fished, the sun went down, the bats and swallows flew, and not much happened in the mayfly department. A few caddis flies were on the water, but almost nothing rose to them. It got darker. I could hardly see Don on the rocks maybe twenty yards downstream. Huge fish lived in here, I knew. They might go a whole evening without rising once, and then, just as you had quit and were walking back to the car, one of the giants would rise with an insouciant gulp and a splashy tail fillip for farewell, to give you a thought to sleep on. So we stayed and stayed, into full gray-black darkness. Then, casting next to the rocks with a size-10 yellow stone fly, Don hooked something big. He shouted the few incomplete comments you shout when you're in the middle of fighting a big fish. I could hardly look, I was so afraid it would get away.

And then, gloriously, he netted it. We took it home and looked at it on the newspaper we'd spread on the counter beside the kitchen sink. The fish was a fat, hook-jawed rainbow more than eighteen inches long. Don's wife, Jane, took a picture of Don holding it up with one hand under one end and one hand under the other. For years, this was the picture of Don that his students found when they logged on to the Web site for his Internet class.

4.

In the Clark Fork River late one fall, I caught a rainbow-cutthroat hybrid that was almost nineteen inches. I was fishing with Daryl again, and he pointed it out to me: an eccentric fish rising in a backwater pool by a scrubby bank, where I would never have expected a big fish to be. I hooked him with a long cast and fought him for many minutes. Cutthroats are so named because of a crimson slash on their throats beneath the gills. This fish, seen up close in the sparkling, buckskin-colored water, was bright as a Christmas ornament yet completely camouflaged.

In the Jocko River, on the Flathead Kootenai-Salish reservation, north of Missoula, I caught one of my best-ever browns. My friend John Carter, a lawyer for the tribes, kindly took me fishing with him there. I hooked the fish on a weighted stone fly drifted deep through a narrow, brush-lined channel. If the fish hadn't taken the fly, I probably would have snagged the hook somewhere down in that branch-filled underwater world. When he struck hard and then came bolting out of there, I embarrassed myself, shouting uncoolly at the top of my lungs for John to come and see.

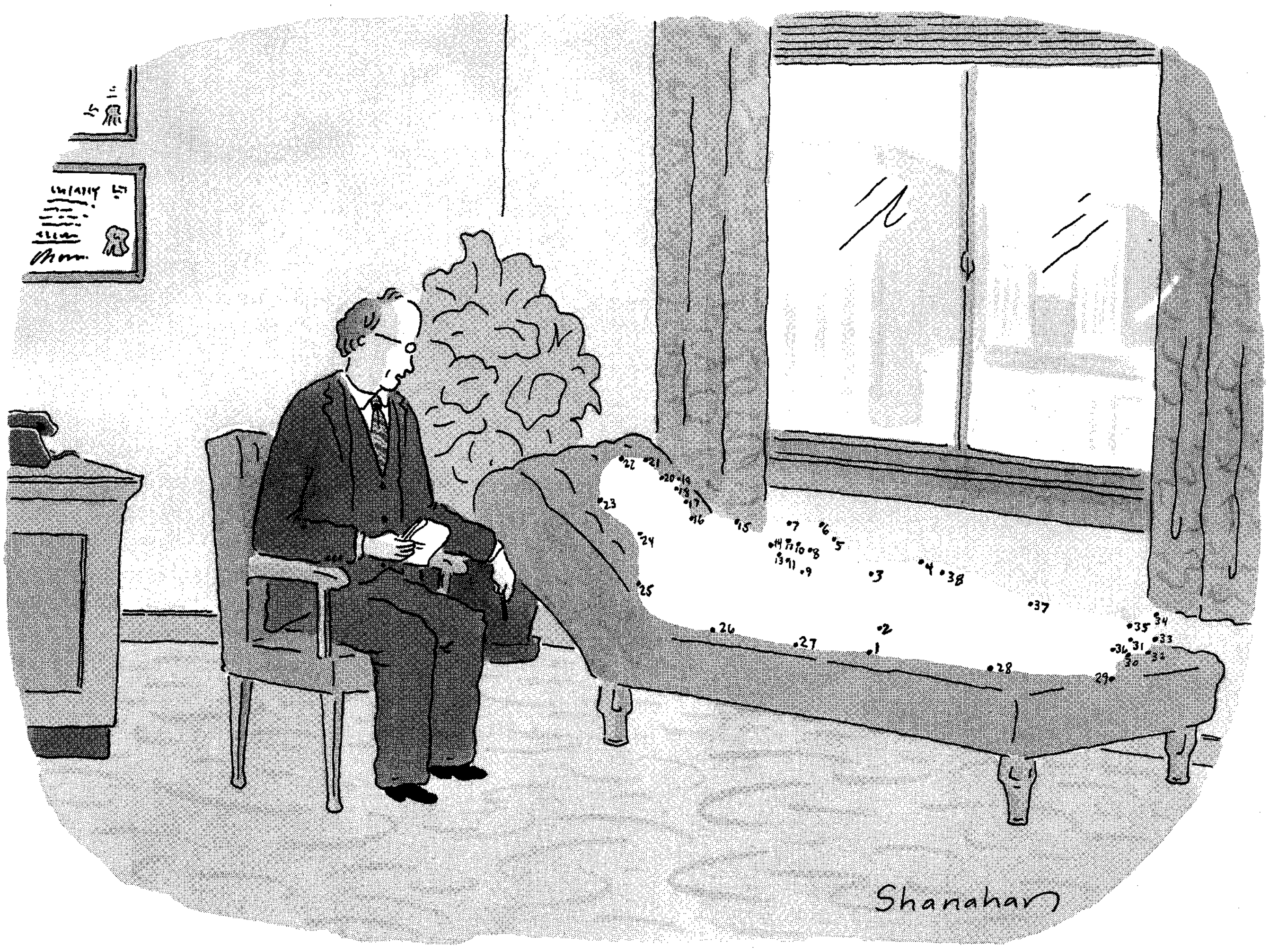
In the Bitterroot again, by a golf course that contributed many stray balls to the riverbed beneath my wading shoes, I caught another big rainbow on a tiny fly. The trico spinnerfall was an almost continuous mat of insects on the surface, and the trout weren't so much rising as just waiting there with their heads half out of the water, straining the food whalelike through their jaws. Some days I tried the most difficult fish I could find; for many evenings in a row I fished for a highly discerning fish that rose regularly in an unhurried rhythm always in the same spot, and which never honored me with a single strike or even a rejection, though I showed it half the dry flies I owned. During the grasshopper weeks of late summer, with my mind on something else, I caught the biggest trout of my life on a quick trip to the river in the middle of an ordinary day.

I fished at all and sundry times, unsystematically. If I went downtown to do some errands and saw fish rising in the Clark Fork, I might lose my head and forget whatever plans I'd made and run home and get my rod and try to catch them. Having so much good fishing close at hand was not always as comfortable as it sounds. Fishing hovered in my mind as the constant alternative to anything I was trying to do: Should I earn money to support my family, or fish? Should I drop the car off at the repair shop and walk home, or drive to the river and fish? Often, the pressure and uncertainty made me irritable.

After we had lived in Missoula for three years, we decided to move back East. I have spent a lot of my life ricocheting between the West and the East, and a while ago I quit trying to figure out why. My wife and I missed New York; our families are in the East; we like the anonymity there; we knew we would come back to Montana again anyway. To us the decision did not seem so unreasonable. To many of our friends in Missoula, however, going back East—and, worse, moving to New Jersey, where we had bought a house—was wrongheaded to the point of negligence, even treachery. Real estate being the all-consuming middle-aged topic that it is, many of us now devote more mental energy to thinking about exactly where we would live than our forebears spent on questions of the soul and its salvation. For us to say we were leaving big-sky Montana for crowded, polluted, rat-eat-rat New Jersey—from a certain point of view, it was apostasy.

Once we had decided to move, my fishing fell apart completely. The freight of specific and unspecific guilt I carry with me just routinely, which always becomes a bit inflamed on a trout stream, now raged out of control as I tried to get in some fishing during our last few months there. What a skunk I was, what a trespasser! Stomping these pristine Western riverbanks in my starchy East Coast waders, I was the cad still living with a woman he knows he is going to leave. All my efforts on the river ended in chaos and rebuke. I thrashed in the brush, caught my backcasts in trees, spooked feeding fish, lost fish once I'd hooked them, popped flies off in fishes' mouths. Once, I made a beyond miraculous cast to a tiny pocket of water between the forks of a tree branch in the river, and something huge took my fly and, ninety seconds later, agonizingly, was gone. . . . Some of my angling failures of those months pain me still.

Time moved slowly and then quickly, the way it does. The morning arrived when most of our stuff was in boxes and a moving man with a West Indian accent was walking around the house putting



"You've got to want to connect the dots, Mr. Michaelson."

• •

little numbered labels on things. On one of our last evenings, I went to the Bitterroot, to a section of river with a gravel road on one side and a dairy farm on the other. It's not the most productive place to fish, but it's an uncrowded one. I didn't want to talk to anybody or have witnesses to my current phase of ineptitude. The date was late August. Hot weather had made the river low and tepid and the fishing slow. A creek enters the river near this spot, and its piled-up gravel delta is a good platform from which to observe a stretch of deep, slow water by some banks of tall grasses upstream. I rigged my rod and watched. Not much rising. The sun on the horizon sent shadows of the cottonwoods clear across the river. A party of boats came by, almost invisible, just voices in the cottonwood shadows; when they passed through the lines of sunlight in between, the red and orange and yellow kayaking wear of the paddlers lit up incandescently.

I waded into the river. For a period, I just stood and watched with my fly in my hand and my line trailing in the water, ready to cast. Little enough was going on, and the fish were rising sparingly; that was lucky for me, in a way, because I could maintain my mood and not get too nervous and shaky. At last light, I caught a cutthroat of about fourteen inches on a Pale Evening Dun. That fish would be the last I caught in Montana for a long time. Then I waded to the shallow water at the edge of the creek delta and stood watching again. The caddis flies were gusting past in blizzards. When I held my flashlight in my mouth to change a fly, they blew by my face like snow in a windshield.

The last of the sunset's glow left the western horizon. I heard no rises, or almost none. I positioned my head so that the slightly lighter reflection of the starry, blue-black sky lay on the black water. In that faint sheen, I saw a small seam appear and disappear. I thought I heard the faintest sound of a rise. The riser might be a minnow, or a leviathan. I had a new Pale Evening Dun, size 16, tied to a 5x leader. (Why didn't I cut the leader back to a stouter tippet when I changed flies?) I cast to where the seam had been; it opened, and I gently lifted the rod. Suddenly, my line was headed for mid-river at top speed. The reel was whirring, the line unspooling, the rod bending, pointing to a far place in the vicinity of the Pacific Ocean. For a second, foolishly, I held the line, trying to slow the fish. The 5x tippet parted. I walked up onto the gravel delta and sat for a while on a log. There were no lights before me, just night and the river; in the blackness the great Bitterroot River swirled by.

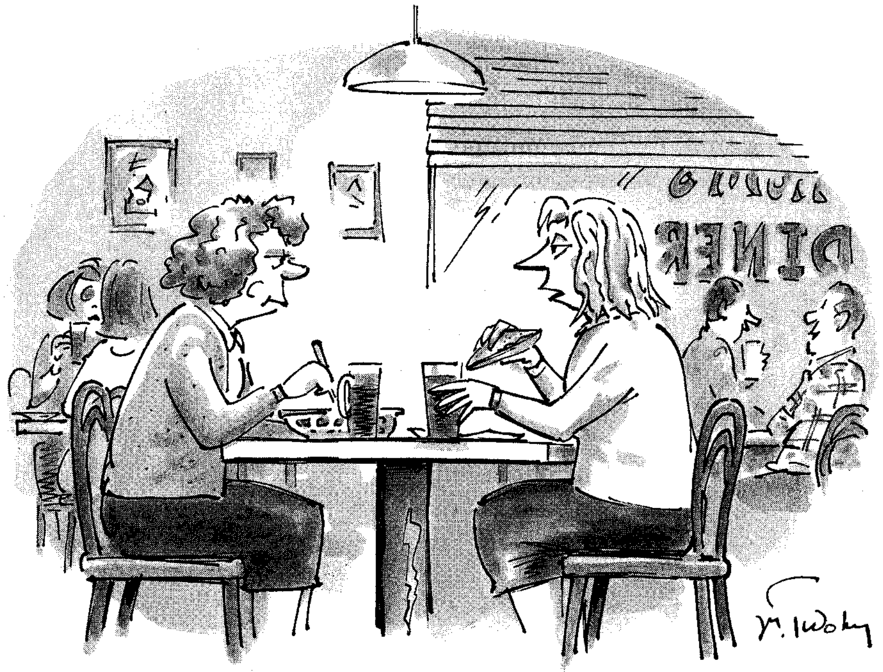
Tomorrow, in the last of the empty cardboard boxes, I would pack my wading boots, still wet, and the rest of my fishing gear.

5.

Soon after we arrived in New Jersey, Hurricane Floyd hit the East Coast. The storm stayed far enough out at sea that the greater New York area did not get its full force, only its endlessly rainy periphery. Warm rain fell in sheafs, in swaths. From low, ill-looking gray clouds, it spilled like a flux. The suburb we had moved to is hilly, and every place that wasn't level became a waterfall—streets, front steps, sidewalks. Every downward-sloping driveway was a torrent debouching into the street. Basements of houses at the bottom of hills flooded. A house we had not been able to afford in a neighborhood nearby appeared on the news partly underwater. When I got up in the morning and turned on the TV, its first words were "Coming up next: Celebrities' reactions to the hurricane!"

Weather notwithstanding, I went into Manhattan on the commuter bus to have lunch with my book editor. I'd been in New Jersey only ten days, and I was footloose, eager to see the city. As I walked downtown from Forty-second Street, very few people were around. The emptiness of the city's public spaces made the storm's demonstrations all the more striking, with skyscraper-high curtains of rain blowing everywhere. Some of the storm clouds were only six or eight stories above the ground, and they looked otherworldly as they travelled down the city's canyons on the wind at forty miles an hour.

After lunch, I wanted to go to the Public Library, but it had closed, so I headed home. The bus, too, was almost empty. The driver hitched up his trousers, shut the bus doors, and backed out of the Port Authority bay with an air of intrepidness. Rain was, indeed, falling harder than before. The swampy plain of the Meadowlands in Jersey just past the Lincoln Tunnel was a storm-darkened North Atlantic seascape with scattered lights here and there that seemed to bob. Low points on Route 3 had turned to lakes with islands of stalled cars. The bus made it through one lake after the next without even slowing down too much. After it turned from Route 3 to the street I live on, however, it came to an obstacle that made it pause. Up ahead, churning across the road, was a creek or river that had jumped completely out of its banks and over the little bridge that spanned it. Foaming like a class-four whitewater, it flooded around the bridge supports and poured milky brown through the lower parts of the bridge railing. I heard it thrumming against the side of the bus as the driver sucked in his breath and powered through.


"If you want to know what Carl is like, imagine Dick Cheney without power."

The storm passed. I made many more trips in to the city, none as filled with raw nature as the first. After Montana, nature as I had got used to it seemed in disappointingly short supply. I had never before lived in a suburb like this—a bedroom community—and I walked all over trying to get my bearings. Remembering the creek or river that had almost stopped the bus that day, I sought it out, explored it. On a normal day, it flowed much more sedately than at my first view of it; its shallow water ran clear, at no more than walking speed, through a concrete channel behind a swimming club, and in its own bed again around a wide bend at the edge of a meadow in which stood tall radio-transmission towers. On sunny days, the correct designation for it seemed to be the friendly one of "brook."

Nobody I asked knew what its name was. No sign at any of its bridges identified it. I followed it through the neighboring suburb of Brookside, where I questioned passersby. The first person I asked was a tobacco-wizened lady puffing on an extra-long who looked at me as if I were nuts. Though standing on a bridge above it, she apparently could not conceive of wondering about its name. Two more people I stopped also didn't know. Finally, I went into a business called Brookside Florists, whose back lot adjoined the brook; I figured that if they couldn't tell me no one could. I asked a guy behind the counter the name of the brook, and he gave me a look that would shrivel weeds. "It's not a brook," he said uncheerfully. "It's a river. It's called the Third River."

At home, I checked a local map, and found it: a hair-fine blue thread, the Third River, hard to see among the density of New Jersey streets and highways. It started in the hills at the north end of our suburb and wound among the hills of our suburb and many others to the south and east, until it joined the Passaic River, which in turn ran into Newark Bay. I had never known a numbered river before. It was the Third, but I could not find the two preceding, or any that came after. Why it's called the Third River is still a mystery to me.

TO THE WORDS

When it happens you are not there

oh you beyond numbers
beyond recollection
passed on from breath to breath
given again
from day to day from age
to age
charged with knowledge
knowing nothing

indifferent elders
indispensable and sleepless

keepers of our names
before ever we came
to be called by them

you that were
formed to begin with
you that were cried out
you that were spoken
to begin with
to say what could not be said

ancient precious
and helpless ones

say it

—*W. S. Merwin*

Every river has to have a name, however. Knowing this one's inspired me to like it more. I started spending a lot of time along its mostly but not all-concrete shores. "I'm off to the Third River," I'd tell my wife as I headed out the door. I saw how it went behind McDonald's restaurants and muffler shops and Italian bakeries and industrial parks and parking lots, and under an on-ramp for the Garden State Parkway, and through a vine-clogged gully at the edge of a high-school football field. I never came across even one kid playing in it, or any sign that its neighbors noticed that it was there at all. I especially admired it after a heavy rain, when it filled with water and roared, still unnoticed, over the rocks and cement and shopping carts in its bed. And all the stuff that floated on it—at occasional brush entanglements across the river, the current deposited its floating detritus, its Styrofoam cups and partly deflated soccer balls and plastic Wiffle bats and chopsticks and packing peanuts, to accumulate in heaps like froth.

Just down the hill from my house is an unnamed (as far as I know) rivulet, a branch of the Third River. On my walks, I often stopped at a little bridge over it, at first mainly from a perverse affection for urban junkiness. The creek seemed just the sort I dreamed of playing in as a kid, if you took away the bright-orange traffic cone someone had thrown in it, and the pair of corduroy pants, and the soda cans. Like a creek in old-time Ohio, it flowed through second-growth forest of long, skinny hardwoods vying with each other for the light. Though the lawns and houses of suburbia encircled it all around, for this short distance it appeared to be a woodland stream, disappearing beyond a brushy bend as alluringly as I could imagine. And, despite the trash, I often saw birds there. Once, a cardinal was singing from a branch over the creek, fresh-paint red in its feathers and black around its eye; and once I peered over the bridge railing directly down into the eye of a mallard duck paddling below. He turned his head flat to the water to see me, expressed an intense ducklike level of surprise, and rocketed away through the trees.

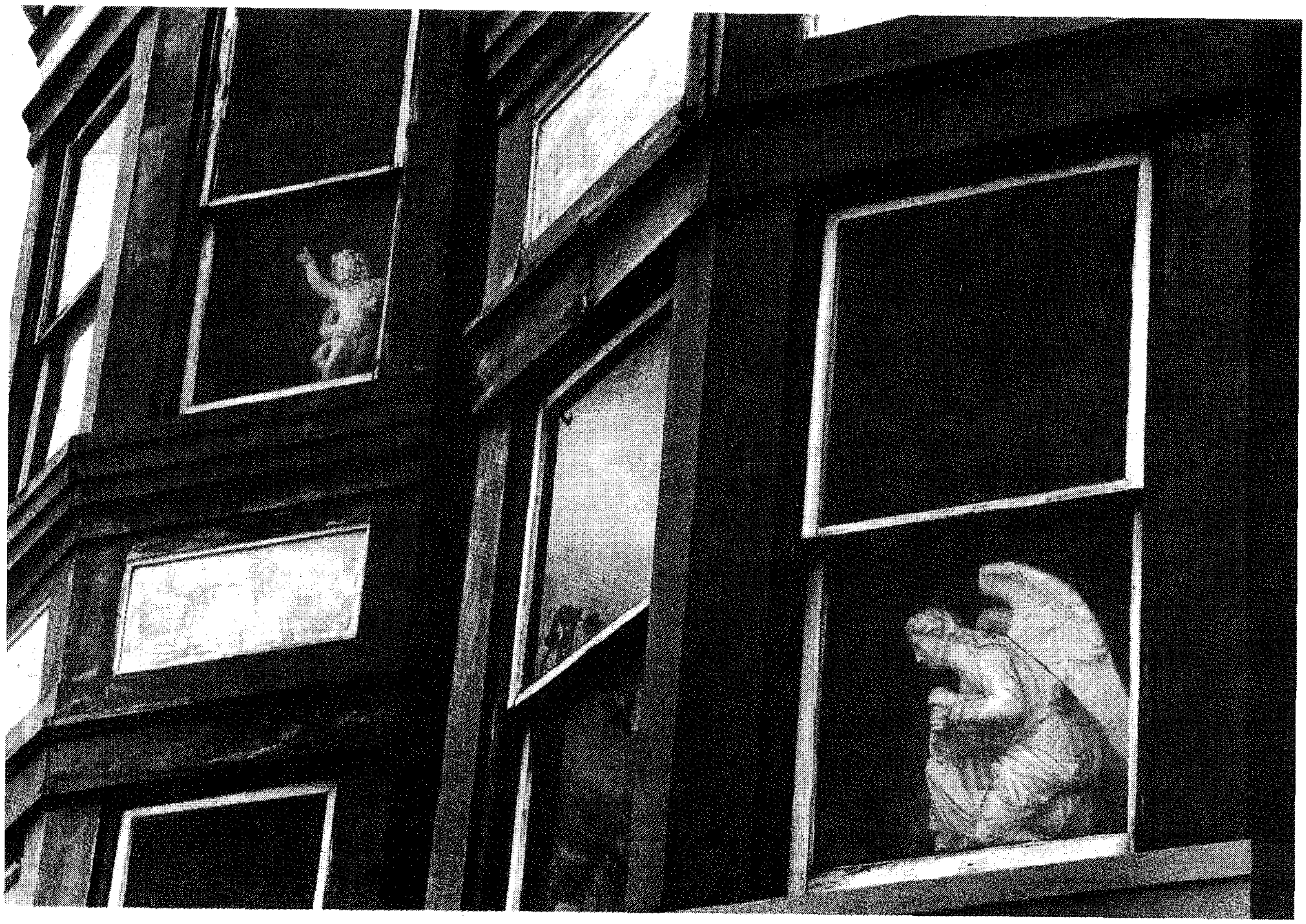
Once you get the habit of looking for good places for fish to be, you never lose it. Even in the most unpromising water, you mentally note where a fish would hang out, if it could. At the little bridge over the Third River tributary, I always did that, scoping out a place just down from the bridge where the creek had carved a bend that someone had reinforced with a wall of concrete. The water was about four feet deep there, a comfortable-looking lie, with a small, tumbling rapids just upstream. Under other circumstances, fish could live happily in that bend. Storm-sewer inflow iridescent with road oil entered the creek from a drainpipe nearby, however, and a decrepit power lawnmower tossed in for good measure, its chrome handle glistening above the water, seemed to reduce the possibilities still further.

But one day as I was idly looking into the water at the bend, something moved. I looked again and saw only the creek bottom's irregularities. I kept looking. There was movement again. Then I saw a little fish holding almost still at the edge of the deeper water. I would have been almost as surprised to see a fish in the stream from my garden hose. As I got closer, I saw more. Fish of four and six inches were facing upstream in the current, moving slightly, sometimes darting around. Farther back in the pool, I saw a flash. An even bigger fish, perhaps a foot long, was turning on his side to kind of root on the bottom, the way I've seen feeding whitefish and even trout do sometimes in Montana. He came through the pool, doing that sideways nudging, oblivious of me. I don't know what kind of fish he was, but clearly he lived here, a hundred feet from the traffic jam, just a fish going about his job. As I watched him, I had no awareness of being in New Jersey, or specifically anywhere. For those few minutes, I was occupied and at home. ♦

FICTION

COMFORT

BY ALICE MUNRO



GEORGE KRAUSE, "ANGEL AND CHERUB" (1962) / GALLERY 292

Nina had been playing tennis in the late afternoon, on the high-school courts. After Lewis had left his job at the school, she had boycotted the courts for a while, but that was nearly a year ago, and her friend Margaret—another retired teacher, whose departure had been routine and ceremonious, unlike Lewis's—had talked her into playing there again.

"Better get out a bit while you still can."

Margaret had already been gone when Lewis's trouble occurred. She had written a letter, in support of him. But she was a person of such wide sympathies, such open understanding and far-reaching friendships, that the letter perhaps did not carry much weight. It was only more of Margaret's good-heartedness.

"How is Lewis?" she said, when Nina drove her home that afternoon.

Nina said, "Coasting."

The sun had already dropped nearly to the rim of the lake. Some trees that still held their leaves were flares of gold, but the summer warmth of the afternoon had been snatched away like a blanket. The shrubs in front of Margaret's house were all bundled up in sacking.

This moment of the day made Nina think of the walks that she and Lewis used to take, after school and before supper. Short walks, of necessity, as the days got dark, along out-of-town lanes and old railway embankments. But crowded with all that specific observation, spoken or not spoken, that she had learned or absorbed from Lewis. Bugs, grubs, snails, mosses, reeds in the ditch and shaggy-manes in the grass, animal tracks, nannyberries, cranberries—a deep mix, stirred up a little differently every day. And every day a new step toward winter, an increased frugality, a withering.

The house that Nina and Lewis lived in had been built in the eighteen-forties, close up to the sidewalk, in the style of that time. If you were in the living room or dining room you could hear not only footsteps but conversations outside. Nina expected that Lewis would have heard the car door close.

She entered whistling, as well as

she could. *See the conquering hero comes.*

"I won. I won. Hello?"

But while she was out, Lewis had been dying. In fact, he had been killing himself. On the bedside table lay four little plastic packets, backed with foil. Each had contained two potent painkillers. Two extra packets lay beside these, inviolate, the white capsules still plumping up the plastic cover. When Nina picked these up, later, she would see that one of them had a mark on the foil, as if he had started to dig in, with a fingernail, then had given up, deciding that he had already had enough, or being drawn, at that moment, into unconsciousness.

His drinking glass was nearly empty. No water spilled.

This was a thing that they had talked about. The plan had been agreed to, but always as something that could happen—would happen—in the future. Nina had assumed that she would be present and that there would be some ceremonial recognition. Music. The pillows arranged and a chair drawn up, so she could hold his hand. Two things she had not thought of: his extreme dislike of ceremony of any sort, and the burden that such participation would put on her. The questions asked, the opinions passed, her jeopardy, as a party to the act.

By doing it this way, he had given her as little as possible to cover up.

She looked for a note. What did she think it would say? She didn't need instructions. She certainly did not need an explanation, let alone an apology. There was nothing a note could tell her that she didn't know already. Even the question Why so soon? was one she could answer herself. They had talked—or he had—about the threshold of intolerable helplessness or pain or self-disgust, and how it was important to recognize that threshold, not to slide over it. Sooner, rather than later. Just the same, it seemed impossible that he would not still have had something to say to her. She looked first on the floor, thinking that he might have swept the paper off the bedside table with his pajama sleeve, when he set the water glass down for the last time. Or he could have taken special care not to do that—she looked under the base of the lamp. Then in the drawer of the table. Then under, and in, his slippers. She picked up and shook loose the pages of the book he had been reading lately, a paleontology book about what she believed was called the Cambrian explosion of multicelled life forms.

Nothing there.

She began rifling through the bedclothes. She stripped off the duvet, then the top sheet. There he lay, in the dark-blue silk pajamas that she had bought for him a couple of weeks ago. He had complained of feeling cold—he who had never been cold in bed before—so she had gone out and bought the most expensive pajamas in the store. She had bought them because silk was both light and warm, and because all the other pajamas she saw—with their stripes or their whimsical or naughty messages—made her think of old men, comic-strip husbands. The ones she had bought were almost the same color as the sheet, so that little of him was revealed to her. Feet, ankles, shins. Hands, wrists, neck, head. He lay on his side, facing away from her. Still intent on the note, she moved the pillow, dragged it roughly out from under his head.

No. No.

Shifted from pillow to mattress, the head made a certain sound. A plop, heavier than she would have expected. And it was that, as much as the blank expanse of the sheet, that seemed to tell her the search was futile.

The pills would have put him to sleep, taken all his workings by stealth, so that there was no dead stare, no contortion. His mouth was slightly open, but dry. The last couple of months had altered him a great deal—it was really only now that she saw how much. When his eyes had been open, or even when he had been sleeping, some effort of his had kept up the illusion that the damage was temporary—that the face of a vigorous, always potentially aggressive sixty-two-year-old man was still there, under the folds of bluish skin, the stony vigilance of illness. It had never been bone structure that gave his face its fierce and lively character—it was all in the deep-set bright eyes and the twitchy mouth and the facility of expression, the fast-changing display of creases that effected his repertoire of mockery, disbelief, ironic patience, suffering disgust. A classroom repertoire—and not always confined to there.

No more. No more. Now, within a couple of hours of his death (for he must have got down to business as soon as she had left, not wanting to risk the job's not being finished when she returned), now it was plain that the wasting and crumbling had won out and his face was deeply shrunken. It was sealed, remote, aged, and infantile—perhaps like the face of a baby born dead.

The disease had three styles of onset. One involved the hands and the arms. The fingers grew numb and stupid, their clasp awkward and then impossible. Or it could be the legs that weakened first, and the feet that started stumbling, soon refusing to lift themselves up steps or even over carpet edges. The third, and probably the worst, sort of attack was made on the throat and tongue. Swallowing became unreliable, fearful, a choking drama, and speech turned into a clotted flow of importunate syllables. It was the voluntary muscles that were affected, always, and at first that did indeed sound like a lesser evil. No misfirings in the heart or brain, no signal gone awry, no malicious rearrangements of the personality. Sight and hearing and taste and touch, and best of all intelligence, lively and strong as ever. The brain kept busy monitoring all the outlying shutdown, totting up the defaults and depletions. Wasn't that to be preferred?

Of course, Lewis had said. But only because of the chance it gives you—to take action.

His own problems had started with the muscles of his legs. He had enrolled in a Seniors' Fitness class (though he hated the idea) to see if strength could be bullied back into them. He thought it was working, for a week or two. But then came the lead feet, the shuffling and tripping, and, before long, the diagnosis. As soon as they knew that much, they had talked about what would be done when the time came. Early in the summer, he was walking with two canes. By the end of the summer, he was not walking at all. But his hands could still turn the pages of a book and manage, with difficulty, a fork or spoon or pen. His speech seemed to Nina almost unaffected, though visitors had trouble with it. He had decided, anyway, that visitors should be banned. His diet had been changed, to make swallowing easier, and sometimes days passed without any difficulty of that kind.

Nina had made inquiries about a wheelchair. He had not opposed this. They no longer talked about what they called the Big Shutdown. She had even wondered if they—or he—might be entering a phase that she had read about, a change that came on people sometimes in the middle of a fatal illness. A measure of optimism struggling to the fore, not because it was warranted but because the whole experience had become a reality and not an abstraction, the ways of coping had become permanent, not a nuisance.

The end is not yet. Live for the present. Seize the day.

That kind of development seemed right out of character for Lewis. Nina would not have thought him capable of even the most useful self-deception. But she could never have imagined him overtaken by physical collapse, either. And now that one unlikely thing had happened, couldn't others? Was it not possible that what tempted other people might tempt him, too? The secret hopes, the turning aside, the sly bargains?

No.

She picked up the bedside phone book and looked for undertakers, which was a word that, of course, did not appear. Funeral director. The exasperation she felt at that was of the sort she usually shared with Lewis. Undertakers, for God's sake, what's wrong with undertakers? She turned to him and saw how she had left him, helplessly uncovered. Before she rang the number, she got the sheet and the duvet back on.

A young man's voice asked her if the doctor was there, had the doctor been yet?

"He didn't need a doctor. When I came in, I found him dead."

"When was that, then?"

"I don't know—twenty minutes ago."

"You found him passed away? So—who is your doctor? I'll phone and send him over."

In their matter-of-fact discussions of suicide, Nina and Lewis had never, as she remembered, talked about whether the fact was to be kept secret or made known. In one way, she was sure, Lewis would have wanted the facts known. He would have wanted people to know that this was his idea of an honorable and sensible way to deal with the situation he had found himself in. But there was another way in which he might have preferred no such revelation. He would not want anybody to think that his suicide resulted from the loss of his job, his failed struggle at the school. To have them think that he had caved in like this on account of his defeat there—that would have set him raging.

She scooped the packets off the bedside table, the full ones as well as the empties, and flushed them down the toilet.

The undertaker's men were big local lads, former students, a bit more flustered than they wanted to show. The doctor was young, too, and a stranger—Lewis's regular doctor was on holiday, in Greece.

"A blessing, then," the doctor said when he had been filled in on the facts. She was a bit surprised to hear him admit that so openly, and thought that Lewis, if he could have heard, might have caught an unwelcome whiff of religion. What the doctor said next was less surprising.

"Would you like to talk to anybody? We have people now who can, just, you know, help you sort out your feelings?"

"No. No. Thank you. I'm all right."

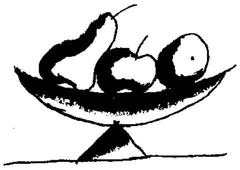
"You've lived here a long time? You have friends you can call on?"

"Oh, yes, yes."

"Are you going to call somebody now?"

"Yes," Nina said. She was lying. As soon as the doctor, and the young bearers, and Lewis, had left the house—Lewis borne like a piece of furniture wrapped to protect it from knocks—she had to resume her search. It seemed now that she had been a fool to restrict it to the vicinity of the bed. She found herself going through the pockets of her dressing gown, which hung on the back of the bedroom door. An excellent place, since this was a garment she put on every morning before scurrying to make coffee, and she was always exploring its pockets to find a Kleenex, a lipstick. Except that he would have had to rise from his bed and cross the room—he who had not been able to take a step without her help for some weeks.

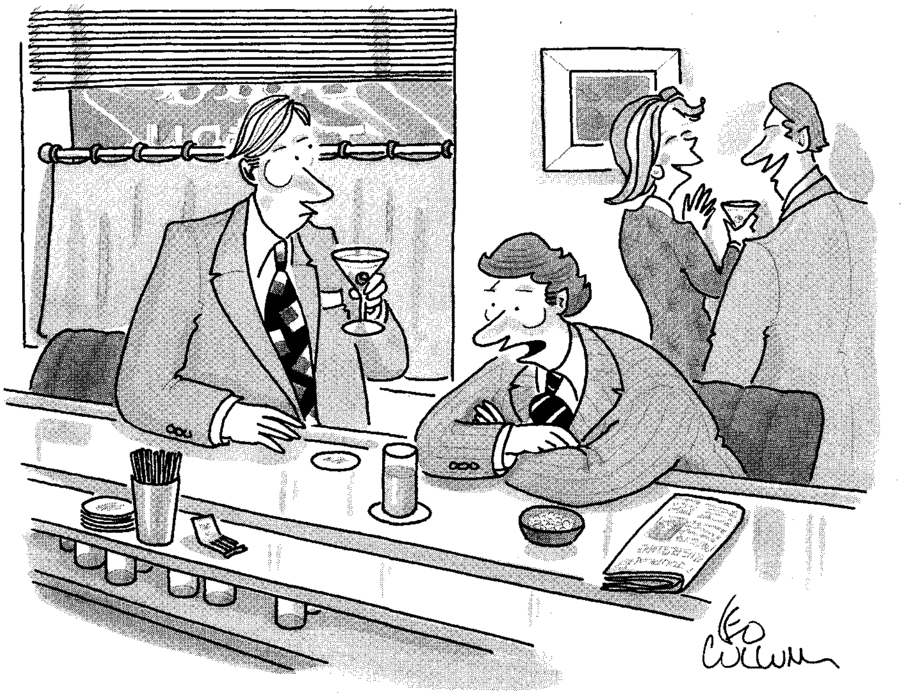
But why would the note have had to be composed and put in place yesterday? Would it not have made sense to write and hide it weeks ago, especially since he didn't know the rate at which his writing would deteriorate? And if that was the case it could be anywhere. In the drawers of her desk—where she was rummaging now. Or under the bottle of champagne, which she had bought to drink on his birthday and had set on the dresser, to remind him of that date two weeks hence—or between the pages of any of the books she opened these days. He had, in fact, asked her, not long ago, "What are you reading on your own now?" He meant apart from the book that she was reading to him—"Frederick the Great," by Nancy Mitford. Nina chose to read him entertaining history—he wouldn't put up with fiction—and left the science books for him to manage himself. She had told him, "Just some Japanese stories," and held up the book. Now she threw books aside to locate that one, to hold it upside down and shake the pages out. Every book she had pushed away then got the same treatment. Cushions on the chair where she habitually sat were thrown to the floor, to see what was behind them. Eventually, all the cushions on the sofa were dispersed in the same way. The coffee beans shaken out of their tin, in case he had (whimsically?) concealed a farewell in there.



She had wanted no one with her, no one to observe this search—which she had been conducting, however, with all the lights on and the curtains open. No one to remind her that she had to get hold of herself. It had been dark for some time, and she realized that she ought to have something to eat. She might phone Margaret. But she did nothing. She got up to close the curtains but instead turned out the lights.

Nina was slightly over six feet tall. Even when she had been in her teens, gym teachers, guidance counsellors, concerned friends of her mother's had urged her to get rid of her stoop. She had done her best, but now, when she looked at photographs of herself, she was dismayed to see how pliant she had made herself—shoulders drawn together, head tilted to the side, her whole attitude that of a smiling attendant. When she was young she had got used to meetings being arranged, friends bringing her together with tall men. It seemed that nothing else much mattered about the man—if he was well over six feet tall, he must be paired off with Nina. Quite often, he would be sulky about this situation—a tall man, after all, could pick and choose—and Nina, still stooping and smiling, would be swamped with shame.

Her parents, at least, behaved as if her life were her own business. They were both doctors, living in a small city in



"We pointed, but we never clicked."

Michigan. Nina lived with them, after she had finished college; she taught Latin at the local high school. On her vacations, she went off to Europe with those college friends who had not been skimmed off to marry and remarry, and probably wouldn't be. Hiking in the Cairngorms, she and her party fell in with a pack of Australians and New Zealanders, temporary hippies whose leader appeared to be Lewis. He was a few years older than the rest, less a hippie than a seasoned wanderer, and definitely the one to be called on when disputes and difficulties arose. He was not particularly tall—three or four inches shorter than Nina. Nevertheless, he attached himself to her, persuaded her to change her itinerary and go off with him, while he cheerfully left his pack to their own devices.

It turned out that he was fed up with wandering, and also that he had a perfectly good biology degree and a teaching certificate from New Zealand. Nina told him about the town on the eastern shore of Lake Huron, in Canada, where she had visited relatives when she was a child. She described the tall trees along the streets, the plain old houses, the sunsets over the lake—an excellent place for their life together, and a place where, because of Commonwealth connections, Lewis might find it easier to get a job. They did get jobs, both of them, at the high school—though Nina gave up teaching a few years later, when Latin was phased out. She could have taken courses, prepared herself to teach something else, but she was glad, secretly, to no longer be working in the same place as Lewis. The force of his personality, the unsettling style of his teaching, made enemies as well as friends, and it was a rest, for her, not to be in the thick of it.

They had left it rather late to have a child. And she suspected that they were both a little too vain—they didn't like the thought of wrapping themselves up in the slightly comic and diminished identities of Mom and Dad. Both of them—but particularly Lewis—were admired by the students for being unlike the adults at home. More energetic, mentally and physically, more complex and vivid and capable of getting some good out of life.

Nina joined a choral society. Many of its recitals were given in churches, and it was then that she learned what a deep aversion Lewis had to such places. She argued that there often wasn't any other suitable space available, and it didn't mean that the music was religious (though it was a bit hard to argue this when the music was "The Messiah"). She said that he was being old-fashioned, that there was little harm any religion could do, nowadays. And this started a great row. They had to rush around slamming down the windows, so that their roused voices would not be heard on the sidewalk in the warm summer evening.

A fight like this was stunning, revealing not just how much he was on the lookout for enemies but how she, too, was unable to abandon argument, which escalated into rage. Neither one of them would back off; they held bitterly to principles.

"Can't you tolerate people being different? Why is this so important?"

"If this isn't important nothing is."

The air seemed to grow thick with loathing. All over a matter that could never be resolved. They went to bed speechless, parted speechless the next morning, and during the day were overtaken by fear—hers that he would never come home, his that when he did she wouldn't be there. Their luck held, however, and they came together in the late afternoon pale with contrition, shaking with love, like people who had narrowly survived an earthquake and had been walking around in naked desolation.

That was not the last time. Nina, brought up to be so peaceable, wondered if this was normal life. She couldn't discuss it with him—their reunions were too grateful, too sweet and silly. He called her Sweet Nina-Hyena and she called him Merry Weather Lewis.

A few years ago, a new sort of sign had started to appear on the roadside. There had always been signs urging conversion, and others with large pink hearts and the flattening line of beats meant to discourage abortion. What was showing up now were texts from Genesis: "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth"; "God said, Let there be Light; and there was Light"; "God created Man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; Male and Female he created them."

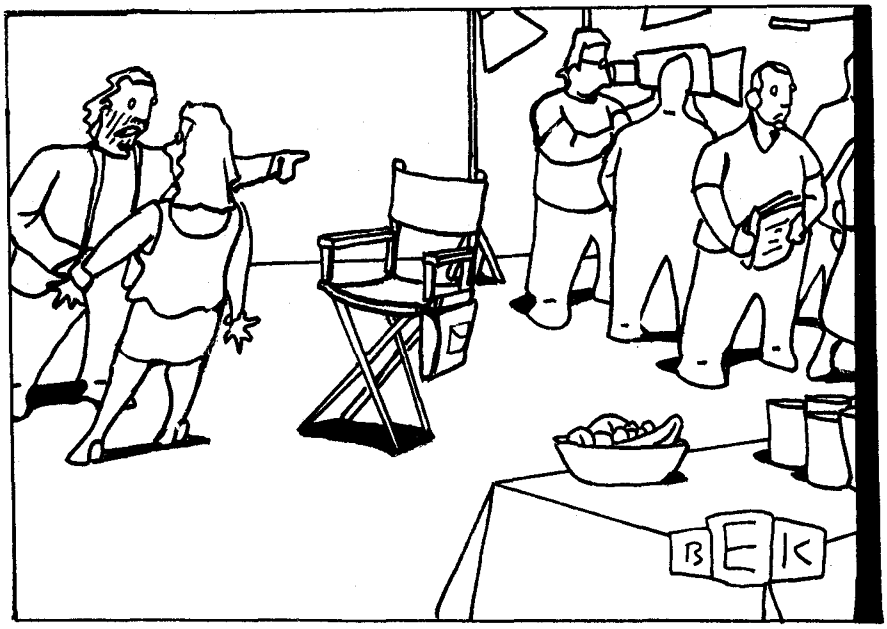
Usually there was a rainbow or a rose or some symbol of Edenic loveliness painted alongside the words.

"What is the meaning of all this?" Nina asked.

"It's creationism," Lewis said.

"I could figure that out. I mean, why is it up on signs all over the place?"

Lewis said that there was a movement to reinforce belief in the literal Bible



"You're going out there an annoying, mannered, not that great-looking girl. But you're going to come back an indie queen."

story, or something like that. "Adam and Eve, the same old rubbish."

Nina's Quaker teaching had not put much emphasis on Adam and Eve, so when she got home she took out the King James Bible and read the story all the way through. She was delighted by the majestic progress of those first six days—the separating of the waters and the installation of the sun and moon and the appearance of the things that creep upon the earth and the fowl of the air, and so on.

"This is beautiful," she said. "It's great poetry. People should read it."

He said that it was no better and no worse than any of the whole parcel of creation myths that had sprung up in all corners of the earth and that he was sick and tired of hearing about how beautiful it was, and about the poetry.

"That's a smoke screen," he said. "They don't give a piss in a pot about the poetry."

Nina laughed. "Corners of the earth," she said. "What kind of talk is that for a scientist? I bet it's out of the Bible."

She would take a chance, once in a while, and tease him on this subject. Though she was careful not to go too far.

Now and then, she found pamphlets in the mail. She didn't read them through, and for a while she thought that everybody must be getting them, along with the junk mail offering tropical holidays and other gaudy windfalls. Then she found out that Lewis was getting the same material at school—"creationist propaganda"—left on his desk or stuffed into his pigeonhole in the office.

"The kids have access to my desk, but who the hell is stuffing my mailbox in here?" he had asked the principal.

The principal said that he couldn't figure it out; he was getting it, too. Lewis mentioned the names of a couple of teachers on the staff, a couple of "crypto-Christians," as he called them, and the principal said that it wasn't worth getting your shirt in a knot about—you could always throw it away.

There were questions in class. Of course, there always had been. You could count on it, Lewis said. Some little sickly saint of a girl or a smart-arse of either sex trying to throw a monkey wrench into evolution. Lewis had his tried-and-true ways of dealing with this. He told the disrupters that if they wanted the religious interpretation of the world's history there was the Christian Separate School in the next town, which they were welcome to attend. Questions becoming more frequent, he added that there were buses to take them there and that they could collect their books and depart this day and hour, if they had a mind to.

The students were taking a new tack, these days.

"It's not that we necessarily want the religious view, sir. It's just that we wonder why you don't give it equal time."

Lewis let himself be drawn into argument.

"It's because I am here to teach you science, not religion."

That was what he said he had said. There were those who reported him as saying, "Because I am not here to teach you crap." And indeed, indeed, said Lewis, after the fourth or fifth interruption, the posing of the question in whatever slightly different way ("Do you think it hurts us to hear the other side of the story? If we get taught atheism, isn't that sort of like teaching us some kind of religion?"), the word might have escaped his lips and under such provocation he did not apologize for it.

"I happen to be the boss in this classroom, and I decide what will be taught."

"I thought God was the boss, sir."

There were expulsions from the room. Parents arrived to speak to the principal. Or they may have intended to speak to Lewis, but the principal made sure that that did not happen. Lewis heard about these interviews only later, from remarks passed, more or less jokingly, in the staff room.

"You don't need to worry about it," said the principal—his name was Paul Gibbings, and he was a few years younger than Lewis. "They just need to feel that they're being listened to. Need a bit of jollying along."

"I'd have jollied them," Lewis said.

"Yeah. That's not quite the jollying I had in mind."

"There should be a sign: 'No dogs or parents on the premises.' "

"Something to that," Paul Gibbings said, sighing amiably. "But I suppose they've got their rights."

Letters started to appear in the local paper. One every couple of weeks, signed "Concerned Parent" or "Christian Taxpayer" or "Where Do We Go From Here?" They were well written, neatly paragraphed, competently argued, as if they might all have come from one delegated hand. They made the point that not all parents could afford the fees for the private Christian school and yet all parents paid taxes. Therefore, they deserved to have their children educated in the public schools in a way that was not offensive to, or deliberately destructive of, their faith. In scientific language, some explained how the record had been misunderstood and how discoveries that seemed to support evolution actually confirmed the Biblical account. Then came the citing of Bible texts that predicted this present-day false teaching, and its leading the way to the abandonment of all decent rules of life.

In time, the tone changed; it grew wrathful. Agents of the Antichrist in charge of the government and the classroom. The claws of Satan stretched out toward the souls of children, who were actually forced to reiterate, on their examinations, the doctrines of damnation.

"What is the difference between Satan and the Antichrist, or is there one?" Nina asked. "The Quakers were very remiss about all that."

Lewis said that he could do without her treating this all as a joke.

"Sorry," she said soberly. "Who do you think is really writing them? Some minister?"

He said no, it would be better organized than that. A masterminded campaign, some central office, supplying letters to be sent from local addresses. He doubted that any of it had started here, in his classroom. It was all planned, schools were targeted, probably in areas where there was some good hope of public sympathy.

"So it's not personal?"

"That's not a consolation."

Someone wrote "Hellfire" on Lewis's car. It wasn't done with spray paint—just a finger tracing in the dust.

His senior class began to be boycotted by a minority of students. They sat on the floor outside, armed with notes from their parents. When Lewis began to teach, they began to sing:

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all.

The principal invoked a rule about not sitting on the hall floor, but he did not order them back into the classroom. They had to go to a storage room off the gym, where they continued their singing—they had other hymns ready as well. Their voices mingled disconcertingly with the hoarse instructions of the gym teacher and the thump of feet on the gym floor.

On a Monday morning, a petition appeared on the principal's desk and at the same time a copy of it was delivered to the town-newspaper office. Signatures had been collected not just from the parents of the children involved but also from various church congregations around the town. Most were from fundamentalist churches, but there were some from the United and Anglican and Presbyterian churches as well.

There was no mention of hellfire in the petition. None whatever of Satan or the Antichrist. All that was requested was to have the Biblical version of creation given equal time, considered respectfully as an option.

"We the undersigned believe that God has been left out of the picture too long."

"That's nonsense," Lewis said. "They don't believe in equal time—they don't believe in options. Absolutists is what they are. Fascists."

Paul Gibbings came round to Lewis and Nina's house. He didn't want to discuss the matter where spies might be listening. One of the secretaries was a member of the Bible Chapel.

"They've got me over the bloody barrel," he said.

"Fire me," Lewis said. "Hire some stupid bugger of a creationist."

"I didn't come over here to talk about that. I mean, a lot of people will think that this bunch is just being reasonable. Including people on the board."

"Make them happy. Fire me. March in Adam and Eve."

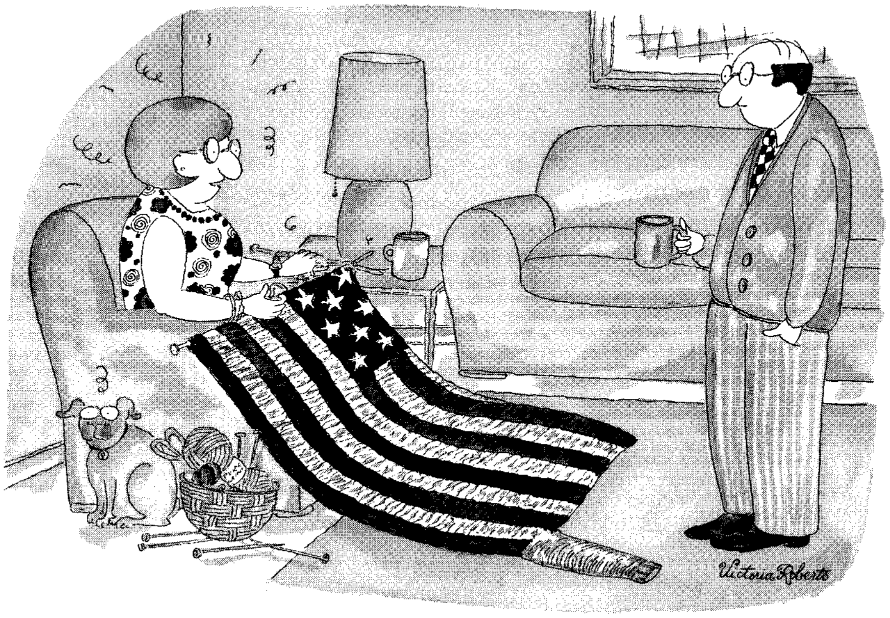
Nina brought them coffee. Paul thanked her and tried to catch her eye. She wouldn't coöperate.

"Cut the crap," Paul said. "I couldn't do that if I wanted to. And I don't want to. The union would be after my ass. We'd have it all over the province—could even be a strike issue. We have to think of the kids. All I ask is that you give a little speech indicating that this is a different interpretation and that some people believe one thing and some people believe the other. Get the Genesis story down to fifteen or twenty minutes. Read it out loud. Only do it with respect. You know what it's all about, don't you? People feeling disregarded. People just don't like to feel that they're being disregarded."

Lewis sat silent long enough to create a hope—in Nina, and maybe in Paul—but it turned out that this long pause was just a device, to let the perceived iniquity of the suggestion sink in.

"What about it?" Paul said cautiously.

"I will read the whole book of Genesis aloud, if you like, and then I will an-



"It was a sweater when I began."

nounce that it is a hodgepodge of tribal self-aggrandizement and theological notions mainly borrowed from other, better cultures—"

"Myths," Nina said. "A myth, after all, is not an untruth, it is just—"

Neither man paid any attention to her.

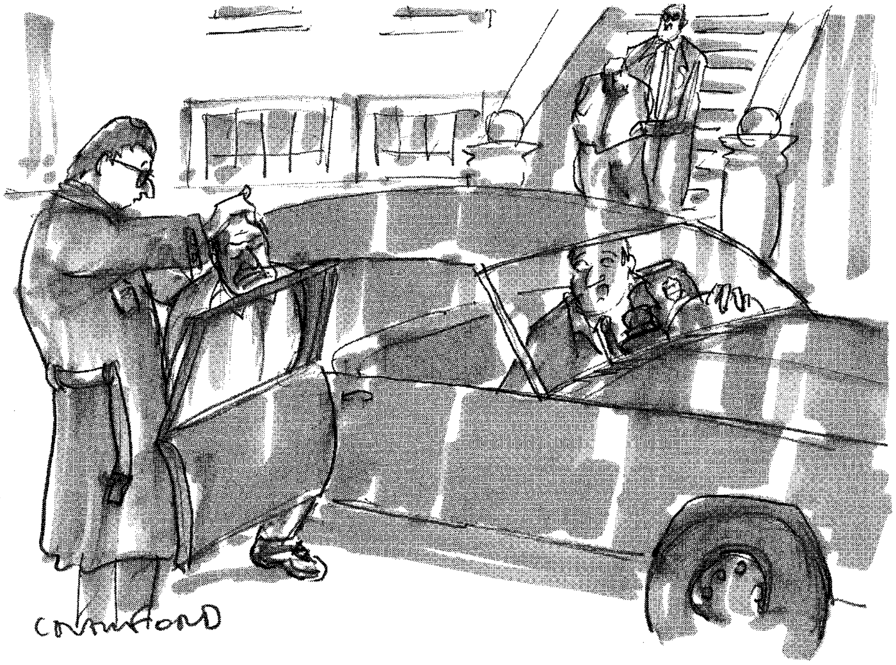
Lewis wrote a letter to the paper. The first part of it was temperate and scholarly, describing the migration of continents and the opening and closing of seas, and the inauspicious beginnings of life. Ancient microbes, oceans without fish and skies without birds. Flourishing and destruction, the long reign of the great reptiles, the shifting of climates, the first grubby little mammals. Trial and error, primates late and unpromising on the scene, the humanoids getting up on their hind legs and then figuring out fire, sharpening stones, marking their territory, and finally, in a recent rush, building boats and pyramids and bombs, creating languages and gods and sacrificing and murdering each other. Fighting over whether their god was named Jehovah or Krishna (here the language was heating up) or whether it was O.K. to eat pork, getting down on their knees and howling out their prayers to some Old Codger in the sky who took a big interest in who won wars and football games. Finally, amazingly, working a few things out and getting a start on knowing about themselves and the universe they found themselves in, then deciding they'd be better off throwing all that hard-won knowledge out, bringing back the Old Codger and forcing everybody down on their knees again, to be taught and to believe the old twaddle—why not bring back the flat Earth while they were at it?

Yours truly, Lewis Spiers.

The editor of the paper was an out-of-towner and a recent graduate of a school of journalism. He was happy with the uproar and continued to print the responses ("God Is Not Mocked," over the signatures of every member of the Bible Chapel congregation; "Writer Cheapens Argument," from the tolerant but saddened United Church minister, who was offended by "twaddle" and "the Old Codger") until the publisher of the newspaper chain let it be known that this kind of ruckus discouraged advertisers. Put a lid on it, he said.

Lewis wrote another letter, this one of resignation. It was accepted with regret, Paul Gibbings stated—this, too, in the paper—the reason being ill health.

That was true—though it was not a reason Lewis himself would have chosen to make public. For several weeks, he had felt the weakness in his legs. At the time when it was most important for him to stand up before his class, he had felt himself trembling, longing to sit down. He never gave in, but sometimes he had to catch hold of the back of his chair, as if for emphasis. And now and then he realized that he could not tell where his feet were. If there had been carpet, he might have tripped over the least wrinkle; a piece of fallen chalk, a pencil, would have meant disaster.



"Lose the guiding head push on the perp, Jake. That is so cop show!"

He was furious about this ailment, thinking it psychosomatic. He had never suffered from nerves in front of a class, or in front of any group. When he was given the true diagnosis, in the neurologist's office, what he felt first—so he told Nina—was a ridiculous relief.

"I was afraid I was neurotic," he said, and they both began to laugh.

"I was afraid I was neurotic but I only have amyotrophic lateral sclerosis." They laughed, stumbling along the silent plush-floored corridor, and got into the elevator, where they were stared at with astonishment—laughter being most uncommon in this place.

The LakeShore Funeral Home was an extensive new building of golden brick—so new that the field around it had not yet been transformed into lawns and shrubbery. Except for the sign, you might have thought it a medical clinic, or a government office building. The name LakeShore did not mean that it overlooked the lake but was instead a sly incorporation of the family name of the undertaker—Bruce Shore. Some people thought this tasteless. When the business had been conducted in one of the large Victorian houses in town and had belonged to Bruce's father, Ed, it had been simply the Shore Funeral Home. And it had, in fact, been a home, with plenty of room for Ed and his wife, Kitty, and their five children on the second and third floors.

Nobody lived in this new establishment, but there was a bedroom with kitchen facilities, and a shower. This was in case Bruce Shore found it more convenient to stay overnight than to drive fifteen miles to the country place where he and his wife raised horses.

Last night had been one of those nights, because of the accident north of town. A car full of teen-agers had crashed into a bridge abutment. This sort of thing—a newly licensed driver or one not licensed at all, everybody wildly drunk—usually happened in the late spring, around graduation time, or in the excitement of the first couple of weeks at school, in September.

Nevertheless, on a perfectly fine fall night and dry road, it had been two seventeen-year-olds, both from town. And just before that, in came Lewis Spiers. Bruce had had his hands full—the work he had to do on the kids, to make them presentable, took him far into the night. He had called up his father. Ed and Kitty, who still spent the summers in the house in town, had not yet left for Florida—and Ed had come in to tend to Lewis.

Bruce had gone for a run, to refresh himself. He hadn't even had breakfast—he was still in his jogging outfit—when he saw Mrs. Spiers pull up in her old Honda Accord. He hurried to the waiting room to get the door open for her.

She was a tall skinny woman, gray-haired but youthful in her movements. She didn't appear too cut up this morning, though he noticed that she hadn't bothered with a coat.

"Sorry. Sorry," he said. "I just got back from a little exercise. Shirley's not in yet, I'm afraid. We sure feel bad about your loss."

"Yes," she said.

"Mr. Spiers taught me grade-eleven and -twelve science, and he was one teacher I'll never forget. Would you like to sit down? I know you must have been prepared in a way, but it's still an experience you're never prepared for when it happens. Would you like me to go through the paperwork with you now or would you like to see your husband?"

She said, "All we wanted was a cremation."

He nodded. "Yes. Cremation to follow."

"No. He was supposed to be cremated immediately. That's what he wanted. I thought I could pick up his ashes."

"Well, we didn't have any instructions that way," Bruce said firmly. "We prepared the body for a viewing. He looks very good, actually. I think you'll be pleased."

She stood and stared at him.

"Don't you want to sit down?" he said. "You did plan on having some sort of visitation, didn't you? Some sort of service? There's going to be an awful lot of people who want to pay their respects to Mr. Spiers. You know, we have conducted other services here where there wasn't any religious persuasion. Just somebody to give a eulogy, instead of a preacher. Or if you don't even want it that formal, you can just have people getting up and voicing their thoughts. It's up to you whether you want the casket open or closed. But around here people usually seem to like to have it open. When you're going for cremation, you don't have the same range of caskets, of course. We have caskets that look very nice but they are only a fraction of the cost."

Stood and stared.

The fact was that the work had been done, and there had been no instructions that the work was not to be done. Work like any other work that should be paid for. Not to mention materials.

"I am just talking about what I think you'll want, when you've had time to sit down and consider it. We are here to follow your wishes, but we went ahead this way because there were no instructions to the contrary."

A car stopped outside, a car door closed, and Ed Shore came into the waiting room. Bruce felt an enormous relief. There was still a lot he had to learn in this business. The dealing-with-the-survivor end of it.

Ed said, "Hello, Nina. I saw your car. I thought I'd just come in and say I'm sorry."

Nina had spent the night in the living room. She supposed she had slept, but her sleep was so shallow that she had been aware all the time of where she was—on the living-room sofa—and of where Lewis was—in the funeral home.

When she tried to speak now, her teeth were chattering. This was a complete surprise to her.

"I wanted to have him cremated immediately" was what she was trying to say, and what she started to say, thinking that she was speaking normally. Then she heard, or felt, her own gasps and uncontrollable stuttering.

"I want—I want—he wanted—"

Ed Shore held her forearm, and put his other arm around her shoulders. Bruce had lifted his arms but didn't touch her.

"I should've got her sitting down," he said plaintively.

"That's all right," Ed said. "You feel like walking out to my car, Nina? We'll get you a bit of fresh air."

Ed drove with the windows down, into the old part of town and onto a dead-end street that had a turnaround overlooking the lake. During the day, people drove here to look at the view—sometimes while eating their take-out lunches—but at night it was a place for lovers. The thought of this might have dawned on Ed as it did on Nina, when he parked the car.

"That enough fresh air?" he said. "You don't want to catch cold, out without a coat on."

She said carefully, "It's getting warm. Like yesterday."

She had known Ed for years, but had never sat with him in a parked car, neither after dark nor in the daylight, never sought out such a place to be alone with him. That seemed a tawdry reflection to be having now.

"I'm sorry," Nina said. "I lost control. I only meant to say that Lewis—that we—that he—"

And it began to happen again. All over again, the chattering of her teeth, the shaking, the words splitting apart. The horrid piteousness of it. It was not even an expression of what she was really feeling. What she had felt before was anger and frustration, from talking to—or listening to—Bruce. This time she felt—she had thought she felt—quite calm and reasonable.

Perhaps because they were alone together, he didn't touch her as he had in front of Bruce. He simply began to talk. Don't worry about all that. I'll take care of it. Right away. I'll see that it goes all right. I understand. Cremation.

"Breathe," he said. "Breathe in. Now hold it. Now out."

"I'm all right."

"Sure you are."

"I don't know what's the matter."

"The shock," he said matter-of-factly.

"I'm not like this."

"Look at the horizon. That helps, too."

He was taking something out of his pocket. A handkerchief?

But she didn't need a handkerchief. She had no tears. All she had was the shakes.

It was a tightly folded piece of paper.

"I put this away for you," he said. "It was in his pajama pocket."

She put the paper in her purse, carefully but without excitement, as if it were a prescription. Then she realized all of a sudden what he was telling her.

"You were there when he was brought in."

"I looked after him. Bruce called me up. There was the car accident, and he had a bit more than he could handle."

She didn't even say, "What accident?" She didn't care. All she wanted now was to be alone to read her message.

The pajama pocket. The only place she hadn't looked. She hadn't touched his body.

She drove her own car home, after Ed had returned her to it. As soon as he had waved her out of sight, she pulled over to the curb. One hand had been working the paper out of her purse even while she drove. She read what was written on it, with the engine running, then proceeded.

On the sidewalk in front of her house, there was another message.

The Will of God.

Hasty, spidery writing, in chalk. It would be easy to wipe off.

What Lewis had written and left for her to find was a poem. Several verses of scathing doggerel. It had a title: "The Battle of the Genesisites and the Sons of Darwin for the Soul of the Flabby Generation."

There was a Temple of Learning Sat
Right on Lake Huron shore
Where many a dull-eyed Dunce did come
To listen to many a Bore.

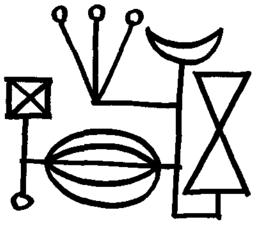
And the King of the Bores was a Right
Fine Chap
Did Grin from Ear to Ear
A Jerk with One Big Thought in his Head—
Tell 'em All What They'd Like to Hear!

One winter, Margaret had got the idea of organizing a series of evenings at which people would talk—at not too great length—on whatever subject they knew and cared most about. She had thought of its being for teachers ("Teachers are always the ones standing up blabbing away at a captive audience," she said. "They need to sit down and listen to somebody else telling *them* something, for a change") but then it was decided that it would be more interesting if outsiders were brought in as well. There would be a potluck dinner and wine, first, at Margaret's house.

That was how, on a clear cold night, Nina found herself standing outside Margaret's kitchen door in the dark entryway packed with the coats and the schoolbags and the hockey sticks of Margaret's sons—it was back when they were all still at home. In the living room, from which no sound could reach Nina, Kitty Shore was going on about her chosen subject, which was the saints. Kitty and Ed Shore were among the real people invited into the group; they were also Margaret's neighbors. Ed had spoken on another night, about mountain climbing. He had done some himself, in the Rockies, but mostly he talked of the perilous and tragic expeditions he liked to read about. (Margaret had said to Nina, when they were getting the coffee that night, "I was a little worried he might talk about embalming," and Nina had giggled and said, "But that's not his favorite thing. It's not an *amateur* thing. I don't suppose you *get* too many amateur embalmers.")

Ed and Kitty were a good-looking couple. Margaret and Nina had agreed, confidentially, that Ed would have been a notable turn-on if it weren't for his profession. (The scrubbed pallor of his long, capable hands was extraordinary and made you think, Where have those hands been?) Kitty was often referred to as a darling—she was a short, busty, warm-eyed brunette with a voice full of breathy enthusiasm. Enthusiasm about her marriage, her children, the town, and especially about her religion. In the Anglican church, which she belonged to, enthusiasts like her were uncommon, and there were reports that she was a trial, with her fanciness and penchant for arcane ceremonies such as the Churching of Women. Nina and Margaret, also, found her hard to take, and Lewis thought she was poison. But most people were smitten.

This evening, she wore a dark-red wool dress, and the earrings that one of her children had made for her for Christmas. She sat in a corner of the sofa with her legs tucked under her. As long as she stuck to the historical and geographical incidence of saints it was all right—that is, all right for Nina, who was hoping that Lewis might not find it necessary to go on the attack.



Kitty said that she was compelled to leave out all the saints of Eastern Europe and concentrate mostly on the saints of the British Isles, particularly those of Cornwall and Wales and Ireland, the Celtic saints with the wonderful names, who were her favorites. When she got into the cures, the miracles, and especially as her voice became more joyous and confiding and her earrings tinkled, Nina grew apprehensive. She knew that people might think her frivolous, Kitty said, to talk to some saint when she had a cooking disaster, but that was what she really believed the saints were there for. They were not too high and mighty to take an interest in all those trials and tribulations, the details of our lives, that we would feel shy about bothering the God of the Universe with. With the help of the saints, you could stay partly inside a child's world, with a child's hope of help and comfort. *Ye must become as little children.* And it was the small miracles—surely it was the small miracles that helped prepare us for the great ones?

Now. Were there any questions?

Somebody asked about the status of saints in an Anglican church. In a Protestant church.

"Well, strictly speaking I don't think the Anglican is a Protestant church," Kitty said. "But I don't want to get into that. When we say in the creed, 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' I just take it to mean the whole big universal Christian church. And then we say, 'I believe in the Communion of Saints.' Of course, we don't have statues in the church, though personally I think it would be lovely if we did."

Margaret said, "Coffee?" and it was understood that the formal part of the evening was over. But Lewis shifted his chair closer to Kitty and said almost genially, "So, are we to understand that you believe in these miracles?"

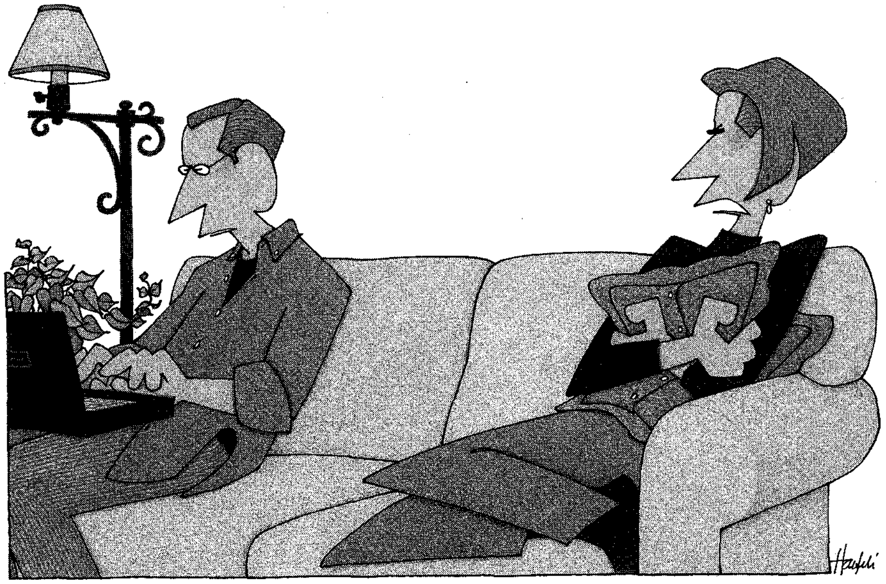
Kitty laughed. "Absolutely. I couldn't exist if I didn't believe in miracles."

Then Nina knew what had to follow. Lewis moving in quietly and relentlessly, Kitty countering with merry conviction and her dance of what she might think of as charming and feminine inconsistencies. Her faith was in that, surely—in her own charm.

But Lewis would not be charmed; he would want to know. What form do these saints take at the present moment? In Heaven, do they occupy the same territory as the merely dead, the virtuous ancestors? And how are they chosen? Isn't it by the attested miracles, the proven miracles, and how are you going to prove the miracles of someone who lived fifteen centuries ago? How prove miracles, anyway? In the case of the loaves and fishes, counting. But is that real counting, or is it perception? Faith? Ah, yes. So it all comes down to faith. In daily matters, in her whole life, Kitty lives by faith?

She does.

She doesn't rely on science in any way? Surely not. When her children are sick she doesn't give them medicine. She doesn't bother about gas in her car, she has faith.



"All I ask for is an occasional frisson."

A dozen conversations have sprung up around them and yet, because of its intensity and its danger—Kitty's voice now hopping about like a bird on a wire, saying, "Don't be silly," and "Do you think I'm an absolute nutcase?" and Lewis's teasing growing ever more contemptuous, more deadly—this conversation will be heard through the others, at all times, everywhere in the room.

Nina has a bitter taste in her mouth. She goes out to the kitchen to help Margaret. They pass each other, Margaret carrying in the coffee. Nina goes straight on through the kitchen and out into the passage. Through the little pane in the back door, she peers at the moonless night, the snowbanks along the street, the stars. She lays her hot cheek against the glass.

She straightens up at once when the door from the kitchen opens; she turns and smiles and is about to say, "I just came out to check on the weather." But when she sees Ed Shore's face against the light, in the minute before he closes the door, she thinks that she doesn't have to say that. They greet each other with a certain sound and an abbreviated, sociable, slightly apologetic, and disclaiming laugh, by which it seems many things are conveyed and understood.

They are deserting Kitty and Lewis. Just for a little while. Kitty and Lewis won't notice. Lewis won't run out of steam, and Kitty will find some way—being sorry for Lewis could be one—out of the dilemma of being devoured. Kitty and Lewis won't get sick of themselves.

Is that how Ed and Nina feel? Sick of those others, or at least sick of argument and conviction? Tired of the never letting up of those striving personalities?

Ed Shore puts an arm around Nina. He kisses her—not on the mouth, not on the face, but on the throat. At the place where an agitated pulse might be beating, in her throat.

With a lot of men, it might be the natural place to kiss Nina, when she's standing up. But he is tall enough to have to bend and so deliberately kiss her in that exposed and tender place.

"You'll get cold out here," he says.

"I know. I'm going in."

She has never had sex with any man but Lewis. Never come near it.

"Had sex." "Have sex with." For a long time she could not say that. She said "make love." Lewis did not say anything. He was an athletic and inventive partner and, in a physical sense, not unaware of her. Not inconsiderate. But he was on guard against anything that verged on sentimentality, and, from his point of view, much did. She came to be very sensitive to this distaste, almost to share it.

Her memory of Ed Shore's kiss outside the kitchen door did, however, become a treasure. When Ed sang the tenor solos in the Choral Society's performance of "The Messiah" every Christmas, that moment would return to her. "Comfort Ye My People" pierced her throat with starry needles. As if everything about her was recognized then, and honored and set alight.

"No," Nina said. "He wouldn't have wanted it."

It was clear that Paul Gibbings had not expected this.

"Nina. Teaching was his life. He gave a lot. There are so many people—I don't know if you understand how many people—who remember just sitting spellbound in his classroom. They probably don't remember another thing about high school like they remember Lewis. He had a presence, Nina. You either have it or you don't. Lewis had it in spades."

"I'm not arguing that."

"So you've got all these people wanting somehow to say goodbye. We all need to say goodbye. Also to honor him. You know what I'm saying? Closure."

"Yes. I hear. *Closure*," she said.

He ignored her tone. "There doesn't need to be a hint of religiosity about it. No prayers. No mention. I know as well as you do how he would hate that."

"He would."

"I know. I can sort of 'master-of-ceremony' the whole thing, if that doesn't seem like the wrong word. I have a pretty good idea of the right sort of people to ask just to do a little appreciation. Maybe half a dozen, ending up with a bit by me. 'Eulogies,' I think that's the word, but I prefer 'appreciation'—"

"Lewis would prefer nothing."

"And we can have your participation at whatever level you choose—"

"Paul. Listen. Listen to me now."

"Of course. I'm listening."

"If you go ahead with this, I will participate."

"Well. Good."

"When Lewis died he left a—he left a poem, actually. If you go ahead with this, I will read it."

"Yes?"

"I mean, I'll read it there, out loud. I'll read a bit of it to you right now."

"Right. Go ahead."

"There was a Temple of Learning Sat / Right on Lake Huron shore / Where many a dull-eyed Dunce did come / To listen to many a Bore."

"Sounds like Lewis all right."

"And the King of the Bores was a Right Fine Chap / Did Grin from Ear to Ear—"

"Nina. O.K. O.K. I got you. So this is what you want, is it? Harper Valley P.T.A.?"

"There's more."

"I'm sure there is. I think you're very upset, Nina. I don't think you'd act this way if you weren't very upset. And when you're feeling better you're going to regret it."

"No."

"I think you're going to regret it. I'm going to hang up now. I'm going to have to say goodbye."

"Wow," Margaret said. "How did he take that?"

"He said he was going to have to say goodbye."

"Do you want me to come over? I could just be company."

"No. Thanks."

"You're sure. You're O.K.?"

"I'm O.K."

She was really not so pleased with herself, about that performance on the phone. Lewis had said to her, "Be sure you scotch it if they want to bugger around with any memorial stuff. That candy-ass is capable of it." So it had been necessary to stop Paul somehow, but the way she had done it seemed crudely theatrical. Outrage was what had been left up to Lewis, retaliation his specialty—all she had managed to do was quote him.

It was beyond her to think how she could live, with only her old pacific habits. Cold and muted. Stripped of him.

Sometime after dark, Ed Shore knocked on her back door. He held a box of ashes and a bouquet of white roses.

He gave her the ashes first.

"Oh," she said. "It's done."

She felt a warmth through the heavy cardboard. It came not immediately but gradually, like the blood's warmth through the skin.

Where was she to set this down? Not on the kitchen table, beside her late, hardly touched supper. Scrambled eggs and salsa, a combination that she'd always looked forward to on nights when Lewis was kept late for some reason and was eating with the other teachers at Tim Hortons or the pub. Tonight it had proved a bad choice.

Not on the counter, either. It would look like a bulky grocery item. And not on the floor, where it would seem to be relegated to a lowly position, as if it held something like cat litter or garden fertilizer, something that should not come too close to dishes and food.

She wanted, really, to take it into another room, to set it down somewhere in the unlighted front rooms of the house. Better still, on a shelf in a closet. But it was somehow too soon for that banishment. Also, considering that Ed Shore was watching her, it might look like a brisk and brutal clearing of the decks, a vulgar invitation.

She finally set the box down on the low phone table.

"I didn't mean to keep you standing," she said. "Sit down. Please do."

"I've interrupted your meal."

"I didn't feel like finishing it."

He was still holding the flowers. She said, "Those are for me?" The image of him with the bouquet, the image of him with the box of ashes and the bouquet, when she opened the door—that seemed grotesque, now that she thought of it, and horribly funny. It was the sort of thing she could get hysterical about, telling somebody. Telling Margaret. She hoped she never would.

She started to look for a vase, then filled a kettle, saying, "I was just going to make some tea," went back to hunting for the vase and found it, filled it with water, found the scissors she needed to clip the stems, and finally relieved him of the flowers. Then she noticed that she hadn't turned on the burner under the kettle. She was barely in control. She felt as if she could easily throw the roses on the floor, smash the vase, squash the congealed mess on her supper plate between her fingers. But why? She wasn't angry. It was just such a crazy effort, to keep doing one thing after another. Now she would have to warm the pot, she would have to measure the tea.

She said, "Did you read what you took out of Lewis's pocket?"

He shook his head, not looking at her. She knew he was lying. He was lying, he was shaken. How far into her life did he mean to go?

"Never mind," she said. "It was just some verses."

They were a pair of people with no middle ground, nothing between polite formalities and an engulfing intimacy. What had been between them, all these years, had been kept in balance because of their two marriages. Their marriages were the real content of their lives—her marriage to Lewis, the sometimes harsh and bewildering, indispensable content of her life. This other thing depended on those marriages, for its sweetness, its consoling promise. It was not likely to be something that could hold up on its own, even if they were both free. Yet it was not nothing. The danger was in trying it, and seeing it all fall apart and then thinking it had been nothing.

She had the burner on; she had the teapot ready to warm. She said, "You've been very kind, and I haven't even thanked you. You must have some tea."

"That would be nice," he said.

And when they were settled at the table, the cups filled, milk and sugar offered—at the moment when there could have been panic—she had a very odd inspiration.

She said, "What is it really that you do?"

"That I do?"

"I mean—what did you do to him, last night? Or don't you usually get asked that?"

"Not in so many words."

"Do you mind? Don't answer me if you mind."

"I'm just surprised. I don't mind," he said, replacing his cup in its saucer. "Basically, what you have to do is drain the blood vessels and the body cavity, and there you can run into problems, depending on clots and so on, so you do what you should to get around that. In most cases, you can use the jugular vein, but sometimes you have to do a heart tap. And you drain out the body cavity with a thing called a 'trocar'—it's more or less a long thin needle on a flexible tube. But, of course, it's different if there's been an autopsy and the organs have been taken out. You have to get some padding in, to restore the natural outline."

He kept an eye on her all the time he was telling her this, and proceeded cautiously. It was all right—what she felt awakening in herself was just a cool and spacious curiosity. They had got to a safe place.

"Is this what you wanted to know?"

"Yes," she said steadily.

He saw that it was all right. He was relieved. Relieved and perhaps grateful. He must be used to people shying away completely from what he did, or else making jokes about it.

"And then you inject the fluid, which is a solution of formaldehyde and phenol and alcohol, often with some dye added to it for the hands and the face. Everybody thinks of the face's being important, and there's lots to be done there with the eye caps and wiring the gums. As well as the massage, and fussing with the eyelashes, and special makeup. But people are just as apt to care about the hands—they want them soft and natural and not wrinkled at the fingertips."

"You did all that."

"That's all right. It wasn't what you wanted. It's just cosmetic work, mostly. That's what we're concerned with today, more than any long-term preservation. Even old Lenin, you know, they had to keep going in and re-injecting him so he wouldn't desiccate or discolor—and I don't suppose they do that anymore."

Some expansion—the ease combined with the seriousness in his voice—made her think of Lewis. She was reminded of Lewis, as he had been the night before last, speaking to her weakly but with satisfaction about the single-celled creatures—no nucleus, no paired chromosomes, no . . . what else?—that had been the only form of life on Earth for nearly two-thirds of life on Earth's history.

"Now, the ancient Egyptians," Ed said, "they had the idea that your soul went on a journey, and it took three thousand years to complete, and then it came back to your body and your body ought to be in reasonable shape. So the main concern they had was preservation, which we don't have today to anything like the same extent."

No chloroplasts and no . . . mitochondria.

"Three thousand years," she said. "Then it comes back."

"Well, according to them," he said. He put down his empty cup and remarked that he had better be getting home.

"Thank you," Nina said. Then, hurriedly, "Do you believe in such a thing as souls?"

He stood with his hands pressed down on her kitchen table. He sighed and shook his head and said, "Yes."

Soon after he had gone, she took the ashes out and set them on the passenger seat of the car. Then she went back into the house to get her keys and a coat. She drove about a mile out of town, to a crossroads, parked, and got out and walked up a side road, carrying the box. The night was quite cold and still, the moon already high in the sky.

The road, on which she and Lewis had often walked, ran at first through boggy ground in which cattails grew—they were now dried out, tall, and wintry-looking. There were also milkweeds, with their pods empty, shining like shells. Everything was distinct under the moon. She could smell horses. Yes—there were two of them close by, in the field beyond the cattails and the farmer's fence. They stood brushing their big bodies against each other, watching her.

She got the box open and put her hand into the cooling ashes and tossed or dropped them—along with some other tiny recalcitrant bits of the body—among those roadside plants. Doing this was like wading and then throwing yourself into the lake for the first icy swim, in June. A sickening shock at first, then amazement that you are still moving, lifted up on a stream of steely devotion—calm above the surface of your life, surviving, though the pain of the cold continues to wash into your body. ♦

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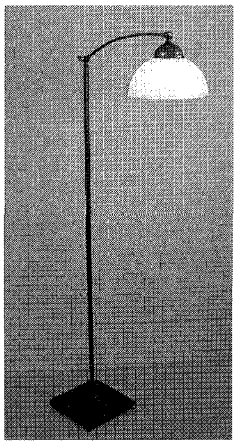

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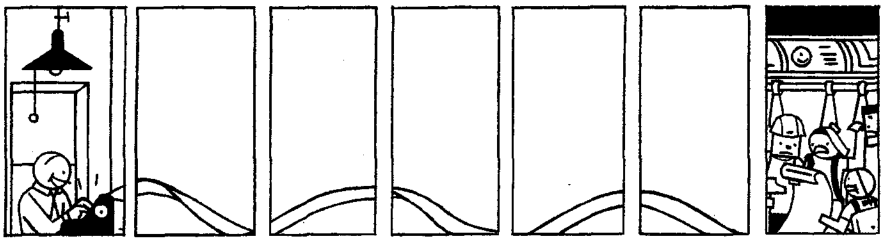


MUSICAL EVENTS

REQUIEMS

New Yorkers take refuge in patriotic hymns and Brahms.

BY ALEX ROSS

On May 7, 1915, the Lusitania was sunk by a German torpedo, taking with it more than a thousand lives. Later that day, in downtown Manhattan, an insurance executive and part-time composer named Charles Ives was standing on an Elevated-train platform when he heard a barrel organ playing "In the Sweet Bye and Bye." One by one, those around him began to sing along: first, a workman with a shovel, then a Wall Street banker in white spats, and finally the entire motley crowd. "They didn't seem to be singing in fun," Ives recalled, "but as a natural outlet for what their feelings had been going through all day long." Ives recorded the experience in an orchestral work entitled "From Hanover Square North, at the End of a Tragic Day, the Voice of the People Again Arose." It was intended to capture "the sense of many people living, working, and occasionally going through the same deep experience together."

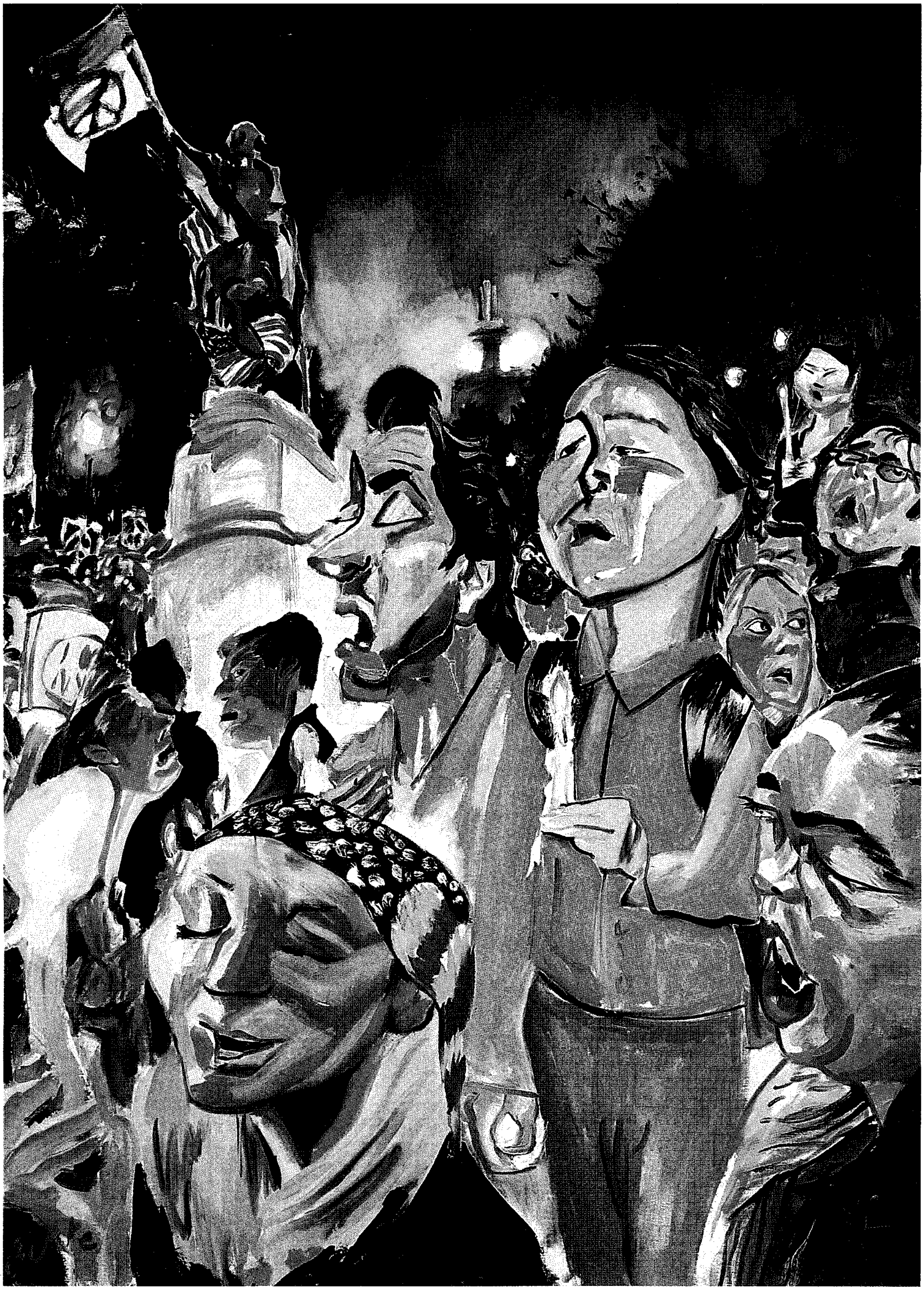
Everyone who was in New York on September 11th will remember not only the sun-drenched terror of the day but also the fullness of human contact in the weeks that followed. Often, the connection was made through music, and the voice of the people again arose in unlikely places. A few days after the attack, I went with my companion and other friends to a vigil in Union Square, on the northern edge of the East Village, where American flags used to be as rare as neckties. We joined a youngish crowd that seemed a little amazed to find itself singing "America the Beautiful." Our group was just warming to it when our neighbors decided to have a go at "The Star-Spangled Banner," creating a snarl of Ivesian counterpoint. Some loud Buddhist chanting nearby made it difficult for either of the hymns to gain momentum. After a while, we all fell silent, and a lone trumpet played "Amazing Grace." Young modern selves, accustomed to nights alone in the home-entertainment watchtower, were stepping cautiously into a Frank Capra scene that turned out to be comfortable and real.

What does music give us when words are stopped in our throats? On an ordinary day, music takes us out of ourselves, allowing us to forget whatever self-invented dramas may be pressing on us. The effect is seldom lasting. But when we are all in the grip of the same emotion, music can shoulder the heaviest part of what we are feeling. A familiar tune billows above us, and we are carried along by it for a short distance. It is a performance with no audience, in which the singers listen and the listeners sing. And only the most familiar, worn-out tune will do. When one part of the crowd is devoted to Jay-Z and another part to John Zorn, the common ground becomes "God Bless America."

Uptown, the city's major musical institutions, which ordinarily move with the alacrity of glaciers, marshalled several remarkable memorial concerts on a few days' notice. The Great Performers series, whose Rachmaninoff Festival had to be postponed when the Philharmonia Orchestra was unable to cross the ocean, presented the Emerson Quartet in a free program at Avery Fisher Hall. The New York Philharmonic somehow put together an impromptu performance of Brahms's sprawling "German Requiem." To benefit the World Trade Center victims, the Metropolitan Opera presented a preview of its opening-night Verdi gala, raising two and a half million dollars. The classical repertory, with its inborn solemnity and flair for catastrophe, was standing ready for the occasion. A program of Bach cantatas by the New York Baroque Soloists and the Orchestra of St. Luke's, for example, issued a lot of potentially incendiary rhetoric about the war against Satan. The canonical masterpieces were written at a time when mourning was routine, and they seemed to know all about what we were feeling, if not what was happening. Whenever the world goes up in flames, Beethoven makes perfect sense. It was true in the Second World War, when the opening notes of the Fifth Symphony were a code for victory, and it was true again last week, when the Emerson Quartet's performance of the Quartet in C-Sharp Minor, Opus 131, shed as much light on the reigning insanity as anything that had been heard on CNN.

Opus 131, which Beethoven finished less than year before his death, has always had a formidable reputation. "Perfect, inevitable, inalterable," Stravinsky said. For all its thematic cohesion, it is an unsettling narrative, rambling through a wasteland fugue, a rustic intermezzo, a bit of operatic recitative, a set of fantastic variations on a mundane theme, a giddy presto, a slow movement that never gets started, and, finally, a wrathful finale, which Stravinsky called "a Magyar uprising." In the wrong hands, the piece can fit the composer's joking description of it as "various odds and ends thrown together." On the Sunday after the attack, it was simply the way things were. The Emersons, who were still shaken by the event, sounded vulnerable, not quite in control, and thus came even closer to the heart of the music than they have on their usual brilliant nights. Beethoven's quartet ceases to be cryptic

PHILIP BURKE



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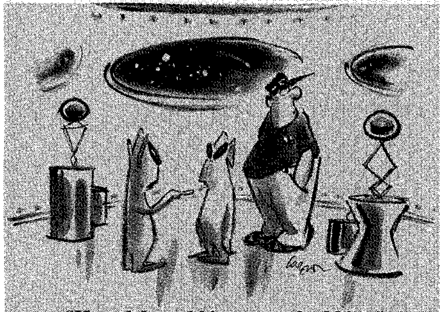
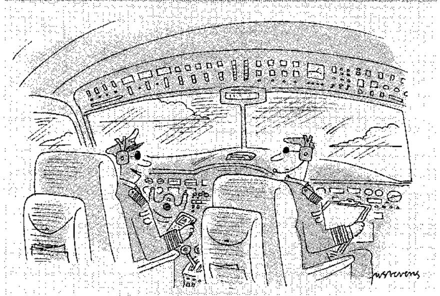
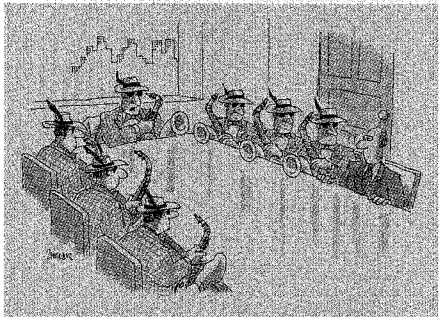


"You abducted him—you feed him."



"This is so cool! I'm flying this thing completely on my Palm pilot!"



"Damn it, Hopkins, didn't you get yesterday's memo?"

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when it is understood as the defiant response of a majestic mind to some unnamed trauma.

The Emersons also played Barber's panoramic Adagio, which brought people to tears, and Bartók's desolate Second Quartet, which made them squirm. Bartók's dissonances had a too familiar ring, like a flashback to Tuesday. In recent days, I've found that my musical appetites are more limited than usual, and the dark and disturbing component of the twentieth-century repertory has been hard to take. It did not help to read, in the *Times* and elsewhere, the morally inane comments of Karlheinz Stockhausen, who called the destruction of the World Trade Center a Luciferian masterpiece—"the greatest work of art imaginable." The onetime leader of the postwar avant-garde was indulging in an adolescent fantasy that has deep roots in the modernist enterprise—that of the artist as destroyer. The avant-garde is at its best when nothing much is going on; it has less to offer a city whose nerves are shot.

During the Second World War, Wallace Stevens asked, quoting Shakespeare, "How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea?" How, in other words, can artists respond to news that exceeds their most extravagant nightmares? Stevens answered that poets "help us to live our lives," and the best they have to give is a certain quality of nobility, which he defined as "a violence from within that protects us from a violence without." That phrase captures the phenomenal power of the Philharmonic's "German Requiem," which also involved Thomas Hampson, Heidi Grant Murphy, the New York Choral Artists, and the American Boychoir, all under the direction of Kurt Masur. This was no refuge of melancholy, no place of sorrow and self-pity. You were aware at all times of the life force in the music—its steady drones and syncopated pulses, its bursts of anger, its consoling warmth.

Brahms's Requiem is German in the same sense that Luther's Bible is German: it was intended not for the élite but for the masses, and it was dedicated chiefly to the living. In the opening movement, "Blessed are they that mourn," there was a sense that the chorus was singing as much for itself as for the audience. Hampson sang magnificently, with a welcome lack of pretense. Masur, who is beginning his final season with the orchestra, chose tempos so unerringly natural that he almost removed himself from the picture. Before the performance started, he stood with the immobility of an honor guard, declining to acknowledge the audience. He was, in that moment, absolutely noble.

The week ended with the Met's World Trade Center benefit, and by then musical life seemed ready to return to normal. Three acts of three Verdi operas were presented; stars of various sizes shuffled on and off; Roberto Alagna and Angela Gheorghiu cancelled; Plácido Domingo brought the house down. But this performance, too, was different. It was more casual than the average evening at the Met, and also several degrees more tense. Nothing was quite routine. The curtain went up to reveal, in place of the set of Act I of "Un Ballo in Maschera," the Met chorus, looking out expectantly. In their midst were the company's general manager, Joseph Volpe, and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Everyone sang "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the Mayor received an ovation worthy of Caruso. At City Opera, too, before a trenchant performance of "The Flying Dutchman," the entire company sang the anthem onstage, including stagehands in tank tops. These collective curtain calls broke the illusion of the spectacle but also seemed to affirm the underlying social contract. Indulge us, they said, as we divert you for a while.

After a harrowing Act III of "Otello," I left my seat and watched the remainder of the performance on the Lincoln Center plaza, where the proceedings were being shown on a large screen to a non-paying crowd of several thousand people. Couples out for late-night walks were pulled off Broadway by the strains of "Rigoletto," Act III. The image was crisp, the sound clear. The citadel of opera had never seemed more open, more part of the life of New York; perhaps the Met will make a tradition of bringing opera into the plaza. We should try to hold on to the sense of urgency that music has found in this bitter time. ♦

ON PHOTOGRAPHY

NEW LIGHT ON OLD STONES

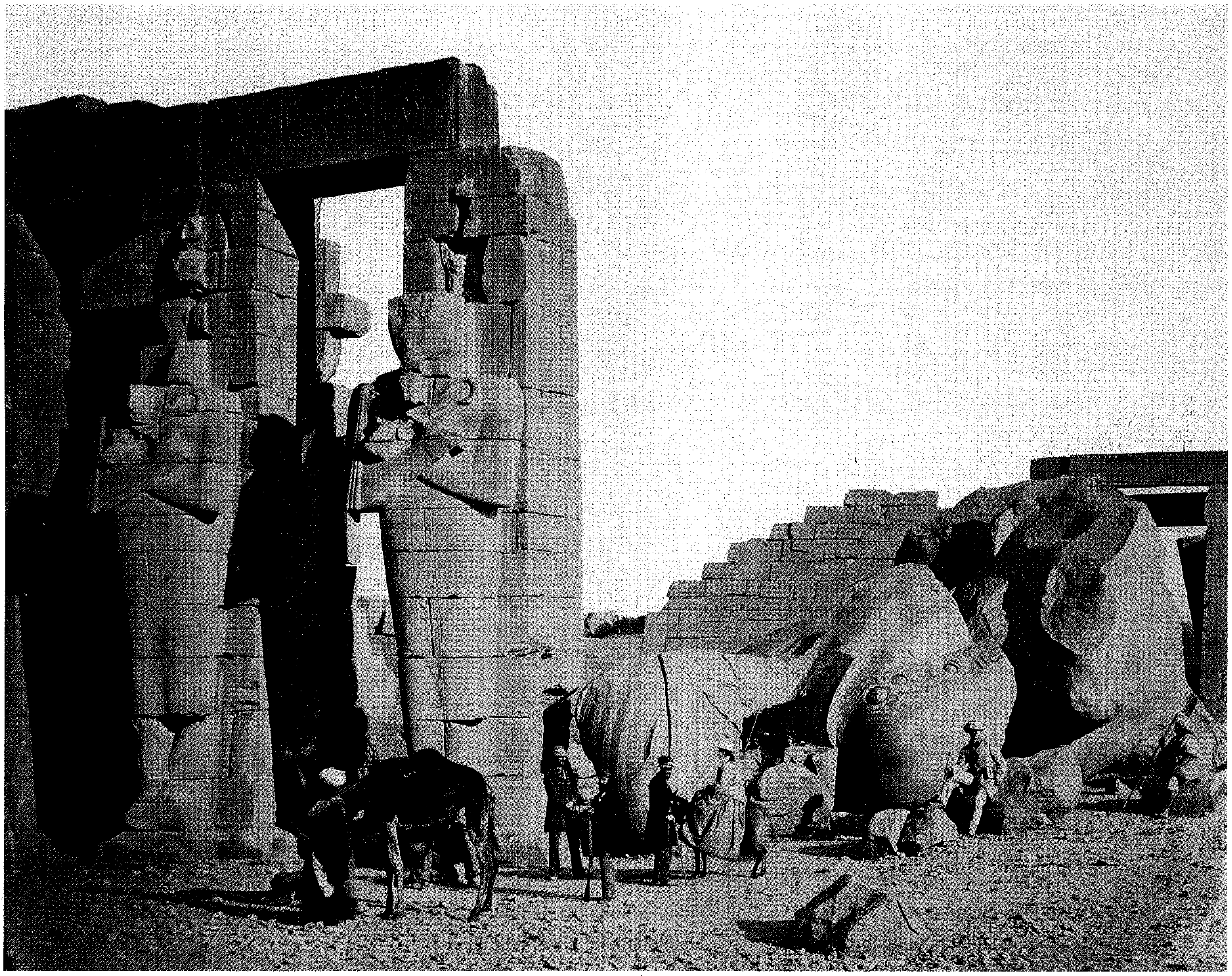
Two Egyptiana shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

BY SIMON SCHAMA

You don’t make photos; you take them. From the start, photography’s working vocabulary, at least in English, has been invasive. Subjects are framed, captured, shot. It must have been easy in 1850 for Maxime Du Camp to persuade his Nile boatman to stand very, very still on the roof of the Ramesseum (Ramses II’s funerary temple) at Thebes. He just made him believe that his camera was a gun. But then Nubians were supposed to make themselves available as human yardsticks for the photographer’s conveyance of scale, thus sparing Europeans the indignity of being dwarfed by the Pharaohs. Look at the pictures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s lovely little show, “Along the Nile: Early Photographs of Egypt,” and you’ll see the shutter and the cartridge paired as naturally as the camel and the sphinx. Eliot Warburton’s “The Crescent and the Cross,” published in 1844, had anticipated this: “A brace of pistols in one’s girdle, and . . . hippopotamus-whip in one’s hand, does more in the East towards the promotion of courtesy, good-humour, and good fellowship, than all the smiles and eloquence that ever were exerted.”

The Victorian excursionists photographed by Francis Frith at the Ramesseum in 1858 compose themselves in shallow space, as if inhabiting their own frieze before a theatrical backdrop of abraded and shattered stone torsos, knowing that the camera has already trumped the colossi. An intrepid Maud sits sidesaddle on a donkey while an armed dragoman, kitted out in nattily checked pants, awaits, like the dromedary, the party’s pleasure. A young man, aquiline nose visible beneath the rakishly tilted headgear, holds his cane lightly between thumb and forefinger and returns Frith’s attention with a dead-on stare. He has already learned the power of the pose, and his gaze has the nonchalant authority of imperial possession.

Missing from Frith’s and Du Camp’s pictures of the Ramesseum is a seven-ton granite head that had been transported to London decades before by Giovanni



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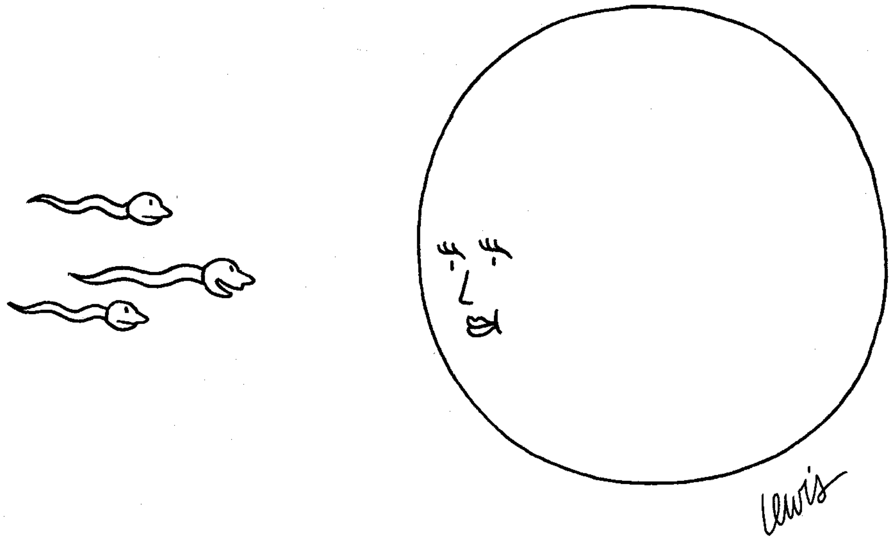
“The Ramesseum of El-Kurneh, Thebes—First View” (1858). Ozymandias’ funerary temple, photographed by Francis Frith.



"Of course you don't look fat."

• •

Belzoni, ex-circus strongman, self-taught Egyptophile, and the greatest of the schleppers of the Nile. It was after viewing some of Belzoni's loot in 1817 that Shelley wrote "Ozymandias," the name the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus used when discussing the largest of the statues at Thebes, which lay in broken pieces before the temple compound.

When Belzoni found the bust lying in the sand, he imagined it was "smiling on me at the thought of being taken to England." This is not how Frith felt about the plunder of antiquities. In one of his famous books of photographs, he raged against the "hordes of careless people who throng the British Museum" and "smile thoughtlessly" at the "incongruous quaintness" of the Egyptian antiquities "and, in England, their unintelligible grandeur." Frith was enough of a cultural entrepreneur to know that the spectacular display of rifled Egyptiana had been the making of the public museum in Europe. He would not have pretended to offer his books as either reparation or apology. But he did hope that they would encourage the export of tourists to the Nile rather than the importing of masonry from it.

The crocodile of cultural guilt seldom breaks the placid surface of either "Along the Nile" or a companion exhibition of startlingly beautiful pictures, "The Pharaoh's Photographer: Harry Burton, Tutankhamun, and the Metropolitan's Egyptian Expedition." The shows document one of the West's most ingrained cultural obsessions, inherited from the Enlightenment: the itch for lucidity and exposure, and the recoil from obscurity and concealment embodied in, for example, the veiled costume of Islamic women or the impassivity of ancient Egyptian masks. The smile of Ramses II at Thebes or of the Sphinx at Giza was not the same as the smile of Voltaire, who, predictably, wrote off classical Egypt as institutionalized cruelty protected by infantile superstition. The optimistic materialists of the Enlightenment had little patience with enigmas. Freemasonry, intensely popular in the eighteenth century, had inherited from earlier pseudo Egyptology a fascination with pyramids and hieroglyphs, but it defanged the occult into something harmless enough to go on the back of the great seal of the sunny-side-up American republic. Very few of the early Egyptomanes understood or sympathized with the place of deep shadow in Egypt. The mission of most of those making the trip to the Nile—from Herodotus to Harry Burton—was, in the habitual phrase of the scholars, to "throw light" on the impenetrable darkness of the tombs, something the English Burton learned how to do by taking a trip to Hollywood to study floods and spots when he documented the Tutankhamun dig in the nineteen-twenties. The very idea of so much sublime skill, intensive labor, and untold wealth being lavished on art expressly designed to be invisible affronted the deepest assumptions of Western aesthetes, presupposing, as they did, the pleasure of display. Rising to the challenge, European Egyptologists became crypt-breakers, in the double sense of tomb penetration and the decoding of glyphs.

They were not the first to break and enter. When the archeologists and draftsmen shipped in along with Napoleon's army got into the tombs at Thebes, they found that most of them had long since been emptied of treasures by generations of raiders, going back to the time of the Pharaohs. The scholars and artists who, once a steam passage was open to Alexandria, arrived in increasing numbers from the eighteen-thirties to the eighteen-fifties saw themselves as the protectors of antiquities from local pashas with no scruples about hauling off ancient stones to build sugar refineries. The real "Egypt," deemed a common property of mankind, needed rescuing from the natives. It was no accident, then, that the most photogenic temples—at Dendera and Philae—were Ptolemaic, dating from only two or three centuries before Christ: the product of a Hellenic-Egyptian cultural fusion. In 1799, pursuing the Mamluk army of Murad Bey all the way to the first cataract of the Nile, General Desaix carved into the face of Trajan's kiosk at Philae an inscription celebrating the victories of the army of the Republic. Half a century later, as another Napoleonic empire was being created, Félix Teynard, in one of the most dazzling of the photographs in "Along the Nile," took care to illuminate—and thus glorify—the French graffiti in a blaze of raking sunlight, while other walls remain masked by a shadow.

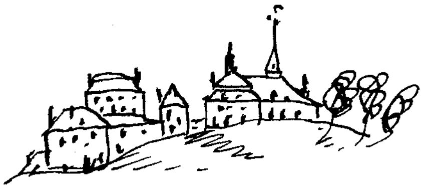
Patriotic grandstanding aside, Teynard set great store by the camera's resistance to romance. In the spirit of Fox Talbot's manifesto for photography, "The Pencil of Nature," the photographers of the mid-century saw themselves as technicians of truth, light-years ahead of the draftsmen who had created the classic, multi-volume "Description de l'Égypte," which was published between 1809 and 1828. Egyptologists sent from Paris, Berlin, and London had begun using a camera lucida—a prismatic lens reflecting an image—to make more accurate tracings. Shortly after Louis Daguerre succeeded in fixing an image on a silver-coated copper plate, the "Excursions Daguérriennes" project was launched to document "*vues et monuments les plus remarquables du globe*." But daguerreotypes were unreproducible images that, set in elaborate frames, in no time at all acquired the status of the art objects they were supposed to replace.

Fox Talbot's invention of calotypes—prints made from paper negatives—changed all this and made it possible, for the first time, to imagine educating a broad public in the unsentimental "truth" of remote geography and archeology. When Maxime Du Camp was commissioned by the French Ministry of Education in 1849 to compile a photographic record of the canonical Egyptian monuments, his camera was described as a "new companion—resourceful, quick and always scrupulously faithful." Du Camp, along with his travelling companion, Gustave Flaubert, wanted his work to stand as a corrective to the steamy fantasies of romantic painting. No more writhing Nubians; no more rosy dawns over the pyramids. But the calotype turned out to be the enemy of hard-edged realism. The grainy softness of the paper negative conspired against factual crispness. In Du Camp's pictures in the Met show, the sky over Thebes sweats with sultry drama and Flaubert waddles about in his Cairo hotel garden draped in a white Nubian robe. Face to face with the Sphinx, the two anti-romantics turned to jelly. "Maxime went quite pale," Flaubert wrote, "and I was terrified that the head would turn and I struggled to control my emotion."

Friends at the outset, Flaubert and Du Camp turned out to be horribly ill-matched fellow-travellers. Except for the epiphany at the Sphinx and another at Karnak, Flaubert made a great show of his boredom with the monuments, preferring to inhale the aromas of the bazaar and envelope himself in the generous folds of the courtesan Kutchuk Hainem. Du Camp, in the meantime, was getting on with the business at hand, hastening (as far as the *cange* sailboats would allow) from site to site, and stockpiling the portfolio of photographs that would make his fame and fortune when it was published in 1852. The book was a portrait of Egypt largely denuded of Egyptians, and his essay on the trip said not a word about Flaubert. But Du Camp's work brought him the Legion of Honor, the admiration of the Parisian *monde*, and enough temporary glamour to steal Prosper Mérimée's mistress.

"Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described by Francis Frith" was published by subscription beginning in January, 1858, just six years after Du Camp's book. But the difference between Du Camp's relatively austere images of pitted columns rising from wind-scoured desert and Frith's gorgeous extravaganzas is the difference between chamber music and grand opera. Frith had been prompted to take on Oriental photography by the commercial and artistic success of David Roberts, a theatre set designer turned Near Eastern painter. The luminous theatricality of Frith's own pictures was made possible by the brand-new wet-collodion process, which substituted glass plates for paper negatives. Prints made on egg-white-coated paper from glass negatives were capable of incomparably greater brilliance, sharpness, and lustre than the velvety calotypes. Frith's three journeys to Egypt and the Holy Land between 1856 and 1860 yielded four hundred pictures and eight separate photographic books. "Egypt and Palestine," which was published in an edition of two thousand, included seventy-six of the choicest pictures. Queen Victoria, who had her own darkroom at Windsor Castle, was an admirer.

Frith needed (in the absence of enlarging technology) three separate cameras for his campaigns—one for regular studio-size prints, the second for the jumbo format (sixteen by twenty inches), and a third, dual-lensed apparatus for the new stereoscopic viewers that had become the rage in London. Two men were used just to carry the crate of glass plates, and Frith's chemicals, distilled water, cork packaging, and several baths and vessels used to sensitize the plates in situ weighed more than a hundred and twenty pounds. He had a specially designed wickerwork carriage in which he both slept and worked. Even so, the collodion boiled on the plate in torrid weather, and retreating to the relative coolness of rock tombs seemed like a good idea until the dust clouds that were stirred from the floor—not to mention the droppings of countless bats suspended from the roof—fouled the plates.



Frith, who was a small-town Derbyshire Quaker, became a shameless imperial entertainer. His yarns about wielding both gun and tripod ("Immediately behind the temple I shot my first Egyptian hare; rather small but well-flavoured") and dealing smartly with threatening, brandy-soaked Nubian river pilots ("Presently his huge bony face glowed with unmeaning alcoholic energy") were a part of his popular appeal. The Egyptology of the museum had always had an uneasy relationship with sensationalism. (Even Herodotus lingers lovingly over the clinical details of evisceration and embalming.) Giovanni Belzoni, a six-foot-seven Paduan who had made his living carrying ten men around a stage in a human pyramid, did not hesitate to display at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly the antiquities unsold to the British Museum, and to auction them off in 1822. The Tutankhamun phenomenon, a century later, united vulgar Mummymania with serious archeology. The Met's wall labels for Harry Burton's dramatic photographs of the unsealing of the boy Pharaoh's tomb make much, perhaps too much, of this show-biz connection. There is also irresistibly watchable silent footage of a dig, featuring a cast of hundreds of toiling natives, and well-heeled patrons mugging for the camera aboard a millionaire's yacht.

But Burton's photographs—the gems from a huge archive, most of which is solidly documentary—are mercifully free of brash celebration. Images of a sycamore-fig garland, taken perfectly intact from a tomb, and of Tut's childish glove, the filaments stretched but not broken against the unsparing light, seem shrouded in apologetic silence. Read as a series, Burton's photographs reënact the penetration of the tomb and the unceremonious, if fastidious, unwrapping of its occupant, who is inspected and inventoried right down to his golden toe stalls. The most affecting image is of Queen Merytamun's unfolded linen wrap, dark stains from the ritual resins poured on her body still rhyming its contours, a photographic reproach to the impoliteness of the trespass. ♦

BOOKS

THE ARRANGER

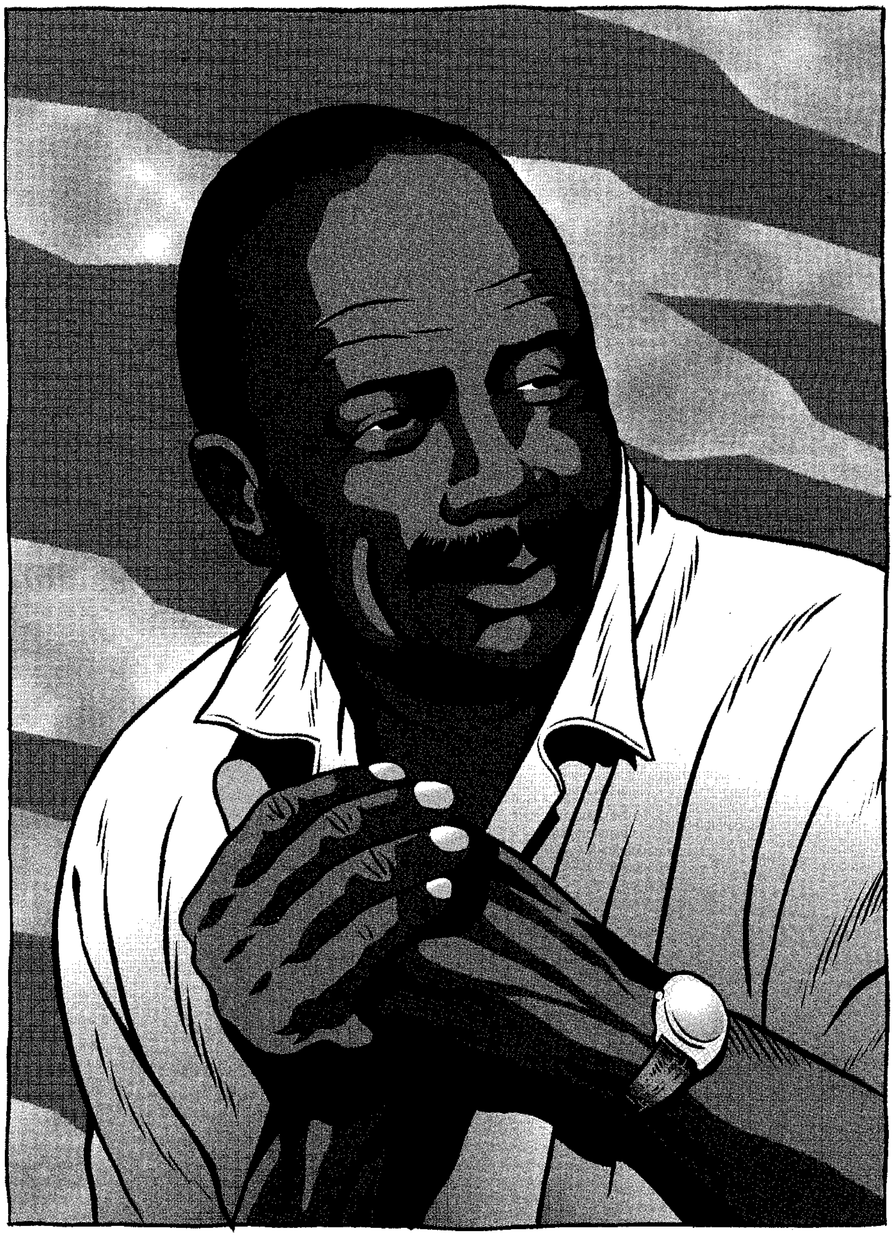
The many careers of Quincy Jones.

BY KELEFA SANNEH

Everyone knows Quincy Jones's name, even if no one is quite sure what he does. Jones got his start in the late nineteen-forties as a trumpeter, but he soon mastered the art of arranging jazz—turning tunes and melodies into written music for jazz ensembles. He also mastered the art of turning great musicians into close friends, and, in time, the art of turning close friends into great musicians. "Q: The Autobiography of Quincy Jones" (Doubleday; $26) is, like the life of the man himself, an appealingly convivial blur of deal-making, celebrity anecdotes, and professional comebacks. Jones's talent for musical and social arrangement placed him at the center of an extraordinary number of cultural moments from the nineteen-sixties on: he launched Michael Jackson's solo career and persuaded Miles Davis to give his last major performance, organized concerts for Duke Ellington and Bill Clinton, produced "The Color Purple," and founded the hip-hop magazine *Vibe*. He has been a musician, a record executive, and a Hollywood mogul, and every few years he has brought together famous musician friends to make the kind of slick, funky pop music that taught a generation of listeners to dislike jazz. This hasn't done much for Jones's critical reputation, and he's barely mentioned in standard histories of jazz. But it has done wonders for his mantelpiece: he has twenty-six Grammy awards, and *Time* recently named him an "Influential Jazz Artist of the Century." If Quincy Jones is not the world's most celebrated living jazz musician, he's certainly the most ubiquitous.

Quincy Delight Jones, Jr., was born in Chicago in 1933. Sarah, his mother, was a schizophrenic, and was institutionalized for a time when Quincy was eight. He and his younger brother, Lloyd, were shuttled to Louisville to stay with their grandmother, a former slave whose culinary specialty involved a rat and a skillet. In 1943, the boys moved back to Chicago to live with their father, Quincy, Sr., who did woodwork for the local organized-crime family—"Gangsters need carpenters too," he explained. The Joneses lived in a South Side neighborhood known as the Bucket of Blood, and Quincy fondly remembers a childhood of knife fights and petty theft. Sarah never again lived with the Jones family, but she followed them around the country, surfacing every few years, like an obsessed fan. At one point, she decided to put an end to her son's "devil's music," and called the I.R.S. to inform the agency that Quincy hadn't been paying taxes.

Quincy, Sr., was as stalwart as Sarah was unstable, and after two years in Chicago he took his boys to Sinclair Heights, a Navy housing complex outside Seattle. There, at the age of eleven, Quincy stumbled upon a piano at a local recreation center. "I'd found true love and nurturing," he writes. "I'd found another mother." A few years later, he composed a piece called "Suite to the Four Winds," scored for a jazz band. "That piece was the most valuable thing I owned," he writes. "I carried it around with me every day like money, scrawling on it, fixing it, changing it." The composition earned Jones an invitation to



Quincy Jones has an impresario's knack for generating hype and making stars.

play trumpet in Lionel Hampton's band—an invitation that was rescinded when Hampton's wife found out that Jones was only fifteen. ("That's not a man, that's a boy," she said.) Jones went to Boston to attend the Berklee College of Music (then known as the Schillinger House), dropped out, and finally joined Hampton's band, at the age of seventeen. He recalls a tour bus segregated by life style: "Hamp, who always traveled with a Bible in his lap, sat up front with the church people. Behind them sat the potheads—that was our group. On the other side sat the drinkers. In the back sat the mainliners."

Jones spent the next decade in and around New York City, establishing himself as a gifted bandleader, but after an unsuccessful European tour with his ensemble in 1959 he decided that he needed a change. "For the first time in my adult life," he recalls, "I went out and got me a real job." Most musicians would consider this a form of surrender, but for Jones it was just the first of many transformations; looking back, it's almost impossible to imagine him doing anything as single-minded as playing the trumpet. He got an A. & R. position at Mercury Records, which led to a vice-presidency. While at Mercury, Jones developed a reputation for versatility, discovering the pop singer Lesley Gore as he was writing charts for Count Basie. In the mid-sixties, he left Mercury for Hollywood, where he wrote music for film and television, and by 1969 he had become black music's greatest gadabout: that year alone, he contributed to seven film soundtracks, released a fusion album that included the hit gospel single "Oh Happy Day," and composed the theme song for Bill Cosby's first sitcom.

Jazz has come to represent an American ideal of inspiration and improvisation, but jazz arrangement is something else altogether. As Jones puts it, "The meat and guts of arranging is sweatshop work, a blend of experience, architecture, soul, and science." He has a genius for deft, uncluttered orchestration, and you can hear it in his best solo records—"This Is How I Feel About Jazz," "The Quintessence," the soundtrack to "In Cold Blood." Equally inspired by the intricate riffs of Charlie Parker and the violent harmonies of Stravinsky, Jones composed arrangements for, among others, Cannonball Adderley, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie,

MARK ZINGARELLI

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Betty Carter, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Jordan, Sonny Stitt, and Sarah Vaughan. He revels in the arcana of orchestration, and his discussion of its intricacies is one of the few signs of his passion for music: "Why does the combination of four alto flutes, four French horns, four flügelhorns, four trombones, and a tuba blend so naturally?"

Quincy Jones took an arranger's approach to everything he did; even when he wasn't making music, he was still mixing and matching. "To me," he writes, "business is about solving puzzles and juggling components." He had an impresario's knack for generating hype and making stars. He knew how to corral talent: in 1985, to record his famine-relief single, "We Are the World," he put forty-six pop singers in one room. When Steven Spielberg needed a female lead for "The Color Purple," Jones found an obscure Chicago talk-show host named Oprah Winfrey. As a pop producer, his mix-and-match style was sometimes a liability (most pop songs don't *need* strings, or a horn section), but he got it just right with Michael Jackson's "Thriller." The inspired and unexpected cameo appearances—Eddie Van Halen's garish guitar solo, Vincent Price's gothic poetry—helped make "Thriller" the best-selling album in American history for almost two decades. (It was recently dethroned by an Eagles greatest-hits collection.) When Jones decided that the world was ready for a mainstream hip-hop publication, he launched *Vibe*, which remains one of the country's most widely read music magazines.

Jones has been successful in so many endeavors that "Q" sometimes reads like a long-winded résumé. The book ends with more than fifty pages of acknowledgments, awards, and discography, and may contain more celebrities than adjectives. Dinah Washington cooks chitterlings for Jones and invites him over for casual sex. Picasso takes him out for dinner, and then arranges fish bones on a restaurant plate in lieu of paying the bill. Frank Sinatra, "a brother in disguise," confesses that he used to have a crush on Billie Holiday—and she's here, too, singing with Jones's band in Seattle, glamorous and dope-sick. Then there's Tupac Shakur, who shows up in a suit and tie to court Jones's daughter Kidada. From Bill Clinton to Big Daddy Kane, from Brando to Bird, there seems to be no one Quincy Jones doesn't know, and like.

If Jones is the rare musician whose renown exceeds his achievement, he is also, not coincidentally, the rare musician with no axes to grind. He goes out of his way not to offend the mothers of his children—he has had seven by five women—and they show similar tact; one ex-wife says, not quite convincingly, "I think he has evolved into a truly admirable human being." Interspersed throughout "Q" are "witness" chapters, written by friends and family members. There are three essays by his brother, Lloyd, who died of cancer in 1998, and reminiscences from Ray Charles and the rapper Melle Mel. In his autobiography, as in his life, Jones is often upstaged, but he never objects; he presents himself less as a musical pioneer than as an observer of musical history.

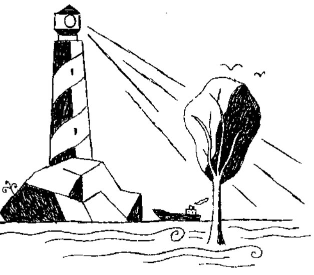
We expect our jazz heroes to be solitary, dyspeptic, opaque figures, but Jones is so open—and so quick to lionize his fellow-musicians—that he seems transparent: you can see a whole world of popular music in him. As he would be the first to admit, when people celebrate his life and his work they are partly celebrating the people with whom he has lived and worked—fifty years of popular music. (In fact, Jones's autobiography will be released in conjunction with a televised "celebration of black music in America," which he helped produce.) If Jones's own body of work were more distinctive or more focussed, he would not be the icon that he is.

In 1974, Jones suffered an aneurysm. He was given a one-in-a-hundred chance of surviving the operation, and when the doctors shaved his head they saved the hair in a plastic bag, in case they needed to glue it back onto his corpse. By the time it was clear that the operation had been successful, an elaborate memorial concert had already been planned, so Jones figured it might as well go ahead. "They had just about everybody I'd ever known and cared about," he recalls. "Cannonball Adderley with Freddie Hubbard in the band; Sarah Vaughan; Minnie Riperton; The Main Ingredient, with Cuba Gooding, Sr., on lead vocals; Ray Charles; Billy Eckstine; the Watts Prophets; Marvin Gaye. Roscoe Lee Brown did a recitation, as did Brock Peters, and Sidney Poitier and Richard Pryor." Even with metal plates in his head, witnessing a memorial service for himself, Jones couldn't help admiring the talent onstage. "That's some lineup," he writes. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Political Fictions, *by Joan Didion (Knopf; $25).* The theme of these eight essay-reports, which Didion wrote for *The New York Review of Books* between 1988 and 2000, is the narrowing of American politics, under the auspices of a self-referential, self-appointed, self-regarding "political class," to a sterile fight for the dead center of a diminishing electorate. No one is better than Didion at using flatness of affect and formality of diction to convey seething anger and disdain. She deploys quotation marks like poison-tipped daggers, and her dissections of the likes of Newt Gingrich and Marvin Olasky (the batty theorist of "compassionate conservatism") are enjoyably astringent. Yet not all the political shortcomings she perceives can be attributed to the villainy she so adroitly skewers; many of them are, finally, systemic, and she has little sympathy for the politicians who have no choice but to pick their way through a rocky, hostile electoral landscape.

The Idea of France, *by Pierre Birnbaum, translated from the French by M. B. DeBevoise (Hill & Wang; $32).* In this elegant, wry journey through centuries of French political theory and practice, a professor at the Sorbonne explores the warring concepts of France—Catholic and monarchist versus secular and republican—that, from the French Revolution on, divided the country. The two "rival authoritarianisms" agreed that France, as a strong, unitary state, could and should impose homogeneity of belief and behavior, an approach that left no room for compromise. In the decades after the Second World War, tolerance increased with the gradual recognition by each side that the other was also French, but this consensus has been shattered by the growth of France's Muslim population; the French are asking how or whether minorities can become truly French if they retain another identity. One result of this debate is that France, which has long chafed against "Americanization," now sees as its enemy not Coca-Cola but multiculturalism.



The Tapir's Morning Bath, *by Elizabeth Royte (Houghton Mifflin; $25).* In this mischievous report on Barro Colorado Island, a six-square-mile nature preserve in the middle of the Panama Canal, the tropical biologists who study the rain forest become themselves subjects for inspection and analysis. The author is a journalist, not a scientist, but she gamely tags along with researchers as they pursue spider-monkey dung and doctoral degrees, while stealthily collecting her own data on *Homo academicus* and its mating habits in the wild. Inevitably, though, she's distracted from the humans by the island's more exotic species: iridescent bees as big as gumballs and enterprising bats who construct tents out of heliconia leaves. By turns comic and poetic, the book delivers the pleasures of a long, meandering excursion, in which the act of observing is its own reward.

Life Turns Man Up and Down, *edited by Kurt Thometz (Pantheon; $26.95).* During the nineteen-fifties and sixties, an extraordinary popular literature flourished among Eastern Nigeria's Igbo people, in the form of cheap pamphlets. Documenting the adaptation of an oral culture to literacy and modernization, these stories, moral guides, and how-to manuals were both lively and confusing, written in an exuberant pidgin called Mad English and littered with felicitous nonsense. This collection has many highlights: in the cautionary tale "Mabel the Sweet Honey That Poured Away," a teen-age girl's sexual voracity spells her doom; a book of advice called "Man Has No Rest in His Life" tells us that "a man without a smiling face cannot run a candy shop"; and the hard-boiled hero of "Adventures of the Four Stars" admires a Frenchman who "has spent most of his life wrecking his brains and reducing the don'ts into doings."

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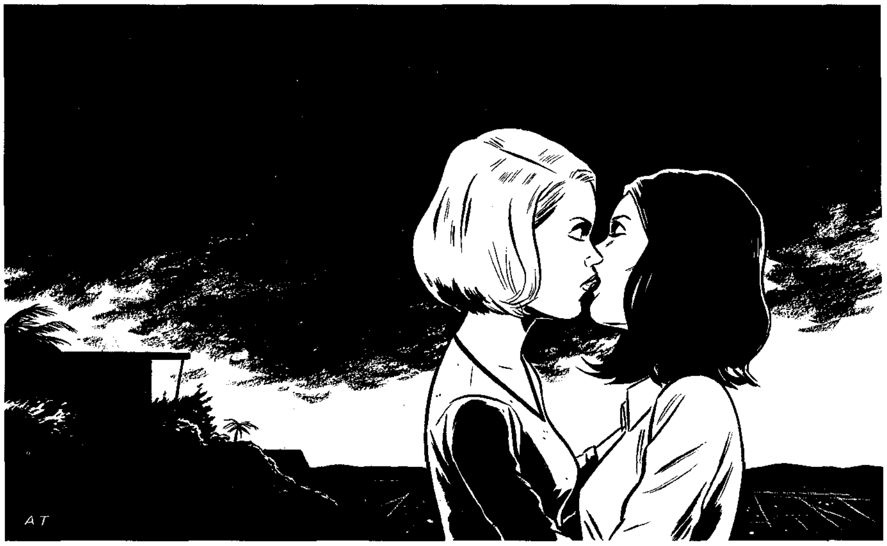
David Lynch and John Dahl look back.

BY ANTHONY LANE

Is there still a place, or a time, for film noir? The question arises because of two new releases, David Lynch's "Mulholland Drive" and John Dahl's "Joy Ride." Each is set in the present, yet both feel restless and constrained, casting their jealous eyes back to earlier periods of paranoia. If "Joy Ride" is the snitty younger brother, cracking jokes, "Mulholland Drive" is the big sister of the two—lush, confident, and happy to guard its secrets. The movie kicks off with a candy-colored jitterbug contest: a sure sign, if earlier Lynch endeavors are anything to go by, that we are heading for the exact opposite—something hairy, slothful, and grim. To see Betty (Naomi Watts) arrive in a pink cardigan at LAX and gasp with girlish anticipation at the treasures of Hollywood is like watching Fay Wray setting off for an island vacation. Betty is an actress-model-whatever from out of town, and it is the whatever, naturally, that arouses the phlegmatic Mr. Lynch. She is staying in the apartment of an absent aunt, although the place is far from vacant; Betty opens the shower door and finds a stray brunette (Laura Elena Harring) who seems to have lost pretty well everything, including, in descending order, her bearings, her memory, and her mind. All she has left, like Mulholland Drive, is a full set of curves.

The brunette was the sole survivor of a car wreck. (Lynch has a thing about road smashes, and about those who stagger away from them, as he proved with "Wild at Heart.") Bereft of a name, she glances at a poster for "Gilda" and steals the name Rita, as in Hayworth, for want of anything better. Needless to say, there *is* nothing better; to borrow your identity from the heyday of Hollywood is, in Lynch's universe, not merely the prelude to erotic abandon but practically a patriotic duty. Next, Rita must discover who she is; that the answer to her inquiries is, if anything, even less clear at the conclusion of the picture than it was at the beginning will be no surprise to anyone who remembers trying to get his head around "Twin Peaks." As it happens, "Mulholland Drive" was itself created as a pilot for a television series; it never aired, but the movie, at two and a half hours, retains much of the unhurried suspense—the careful cultivating of our patience, of our narrative loyalty—that is bred by the best TV.

Rita enlists Betty's aid, and the two of them prowl around unfamiliar apartments; the locations are one of the creepier joys of this picture, with Lynch unerringly picking out the tropical and the gothic. The sleuths get an innocent rise from playing Nancy Drew, and yet, at some indefinable point—one of those great moments that make my job worthwhile—we are urged to wonder whether the odd couple are really so mismatched. From here, it is but a short slink to the bedroom, and to the kind of pillow talk that would make Doris Day blush. "Have you ever done this before?" Betty asks. "I don't know," Rita says. It's a wonderful joke, not only directing us to the sexiness of Rita's amnesiac trance—if we forgot ourselves, what would any of us not dare to do?—but also mocking the porno traditions in which Lynch, since "Lost Highway," seems willing to bathe. The sex is dimmed in a rustling, twilit gray; throughout the movie, Lynch hovers in such proximity to his leading ladies that you start to ask whether his prime intention is not so much to tell their story as to feel their breath on his cheek. He is becoming a mirror-image Hitchcock; both men are fetishists, but, whereas Hitch, cleaving to the path of the plot, litters his favored trinkets like clues along the way, Lynch is increasingly willing to stretch and wrench his narratives for the sole purpose of accommodating his objects of desire—eyes, breasts, telephones, and lips as bright as blood.



Naomi Watts and Laura Elena Harring in Lynch's "Mulholland Drive."

ADRIAN TOMINE

There is much more to "Mulholland Drive," but it doesn't have the same sway. Lynch takes a prolonged swipe at the vagaries of Hollywood, as a director called Adam (Justin Theroux) watches his life, his wife, and his career slither from his grasp. A bunch of semi-silent thugs instruct him to hire a specific actress for his latest film; whether Lynch intends this as professional satire or as a surreal riff on the madness of the industry, it feels coarse and heavy, and you find it hard to care what happens to the unappealing Adam. For the most part, the men in "Mulholland Drive" are klutzes, dolts, and geeks, with a few drum-bellied heavies hurled in for good measure; they are too busy being consumed by rage and premonition, or too hamstrung by the female of the species, to spare any room for style.

As the film hits the two-hour mark, the camera plunges into a small blue box—a mysterious receptacle to which Rita has the key. From here on, we are lost in a forest of hints and contradictions. Were Betty and Rita lovers all along? Did they split up, then take refuge in the thought of renewed togetherness? Is the super-subtle Lynch a closet vulgarian, asking us to believe that everything has been—oh dear—a dream? If I were pinned down and forced to venture a suggestion as to what "Mulholland Drive" is about, I might say that it was about faking it—about the rare pleasure of slipping into the skin of someone else. All the flashpoints of this ardent movie are touched off by deceit; when a woman named Rebekah del Rio—a real-life singer from Los Angeles—sobs her soul out in a stage rendition of "Llorando," she ends up swooning to the floor, and yet her voice carries on. She was miming to a tape, yet the mimicry of passion was enough to fell her. More stirring still is an audition at which Betty reads lines for a cheesy love scene. She has already tried them out with Rita at home, and nothing happened; now, faced with a tan fellow-actor, she gives her all, and the pearly hopeful is suddenly transfigured into a bad girl, ravenous and raw.

Note that there is no Lynchian wizardry at work in this sequence, no strobing or funereal gloom; elsewhere, he hauls in the statutory dwarf and a chalk-faced, prophetic cowboy in a plaid coat, but here we have nothing except the heroine doing her job. Yet the power of her yielding reaches to the root of this elusive picture and suggests that those viewers who like to quiz themselves on the meaning of a Lynch film, as if it were an audiovisual crossword, and to congratulate themselves on making the answers fit, are in the wrong game. The question is not "Does 'Mulholland Drive' make sense?," or even "Is it meant to make sense?," but, rather, as Laurence Olivier once demanded of Dustin Hoffman, "Is it safe?" If, as happens in the new movie, you come out of the theatre feeling half as secure as you went in, then the mission has been accomplished. All Lynch's work is hit and miss, but, whenever he hits (and I'm not sure that even *he* knows when, let alone why, he has pulled it off), the role of common sense is flooded and short-circuited by the uncommon gratification of the senses. When David Hockney painted a picture entitled "Mulholland Drive," he explained that the word "Drive" was "not the name of the road but the act of driving," and although Lynch's shadow-caked palette could not be more different from Hockney's, his motive is the same. This film is a record of a journey, and it leaves us with the dreadful possibility that all highways are lost.

There is something comforting, by contrast, in the game plan of "Joy Ride." The director, John Dahl, has no intention to baffle or obscure; his objective is to scare the living daylights out of you, or, more pertinently, the dying headlights. The movie puts Paul Walker, last seen burning rubber in "The Fast and the Furious," back at the wheel. This time, he plays a college student named Lewis Thomas, who decides to drive across country to make contact with a close friend, Venna (Leelee Sobieski). Along the way, he diverts to pick up his brother Fuller (Steve Zahn), the bleating black sheep of the family. For a lark, Fuller buys a CB radio, but even at this stage you sense something awry in his impulsive moves. They are, to an alarmingly literal degree, mindless, and more contagious than you would expect; he has no problem persuading his sensible brother to adopt a woman's voice and start flirting with other CB users—in particular, someone by the name of Rusty Nail, whose cinders-and-bourbon voice sounds like Lee Marvin doing a late-night impersonation of Willie Nelson. The prank backfires, and soon the boys are being hounded across the flatlands by the trucker from Hell. They shake him off, meet with Venna as planned, and continue on their way. Then the fun *really* begins.

It is part of the legacy of film noir that the pure need not be simple, and, if there is complexity here, it lives in the slow, malign transformation of tone. What feels like a spinoff of "Road Trip" veers into territory that we associate with movies like "The Hitcher" and, of course, "Duel," Steven Spielberg's early exercise in fright. (Like Spielberg's villain, Rusty Nail is plugged so securely into the cockpit of his vehicle that he cannot be seen even darkly through the glass.) Only by the skin of its teeth can the result be viewed as a modern movie; younger viewers, who were not even born when Sam Peckinpah's "Convoy" came out, will clutch their cell phones tight and wonder what Cretaceous era of history these CB contraptions date from, while the anxious opening of the trunk is a tribute to "Kiss Me Deadly," and the meshing of motel neon and slick black rain was seriously old news by the time Hitchcock resurrected it for "Psycho." I guess that, to someone as buffish as Dahl, the antique shocks, like the old jokes, are still the best.

The main reason to see the movie is Steve Zahn, who, as the funniest munchkin of our time, is taking a risk by allowing himself to be sidetracked into the unfunny. That the gamble pays off is a tribute both to Dahl, who persists in allotting Fuller his ration of gags even as the brothers' car is being followed to a lonely gas station, and also to Zahn's instinctive comic nerves; like Bob Hope, he has the protruding eyes and lizard-quick grin of a coward who is almost relieved to bump into something that will justify his panic. There are times when he wanders off into little speeches that acknowledge his own existence inside the bubble of movies. I loved the lazy soliloquy on the sublimities of his American past: "Mom's chocolate-chip cookies . . . playing ball with Dad on Sundays . . . no, wait, that's someone else's childhood." And what about the moment when Lewis and Venna are flirting in the front seat and he rises from the back to egg them on? "This is the part where you kiss the girl—well, *historically*." Zahn makes it his duty to remind us that although we may squirm as the movie tightens the noose, it is nothing we haven't felt before. That doesn't lessen the pressure, but it may explain why we keep going back for more. Just ask David Lynch. ♦

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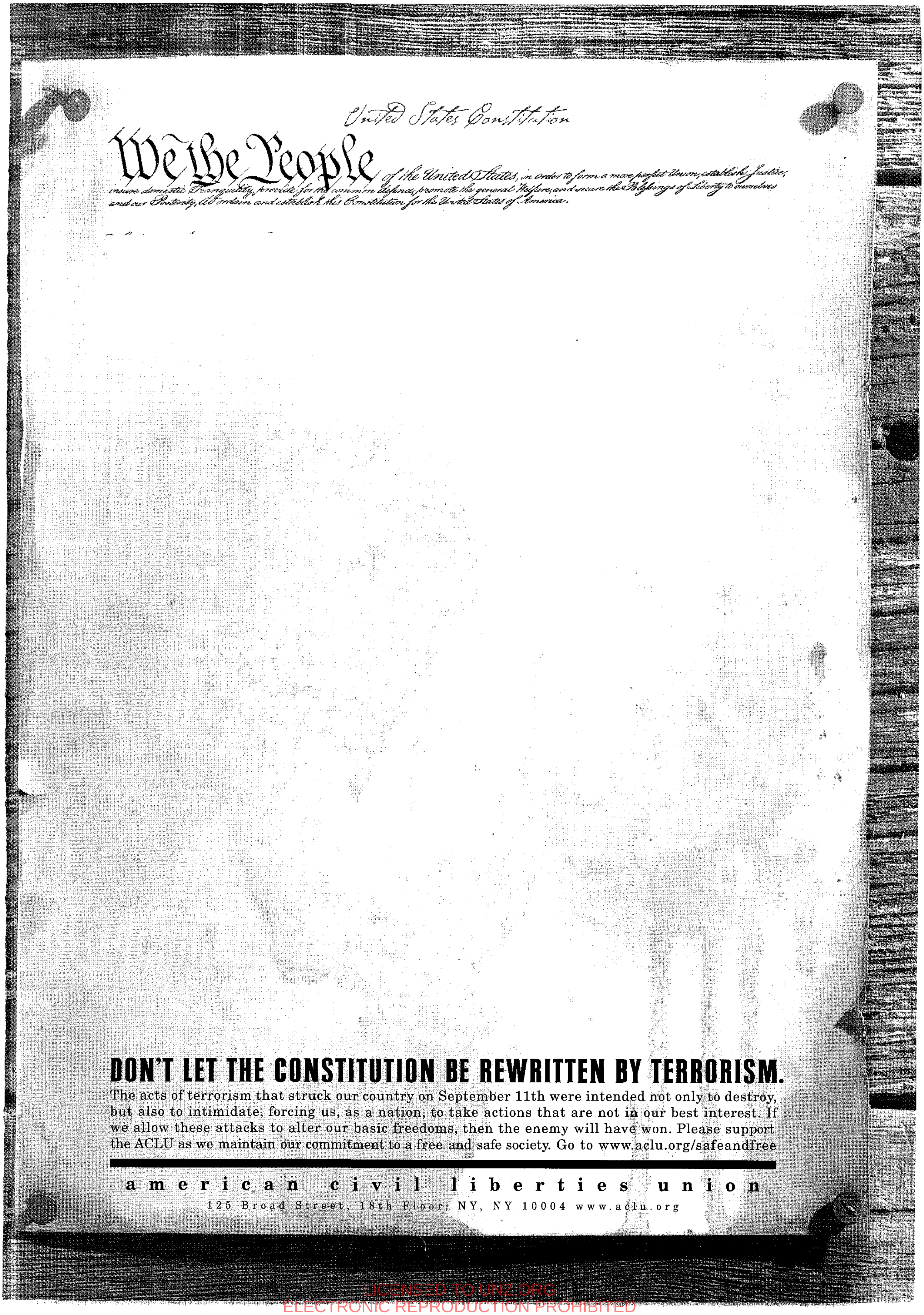
THE DISAPPEARANCES

"Where was it one first heard of the truth?"

On a day like any other day,
like "yesterday or centuries before,"
in a town with the one remembered street,
shaded by the buckeye and the sycamore—
the street long and true as a theorem,
the day like yesterday or the day before,
the street you walked down centuries before—
the story the same as the others flooding in
from the cardinal points is
turning to take a good look at you.
Every creature, intelligent or not, has disappeared—
the humans, phosphorescent,
the duplicating pets, the guppies and spaniels,
the Woolworth's turtle that cost forty-nine cents
(with the soiled price tag half-peeled on its shell)—
but, from the look of things, it only just happened.
The wheels of the upside-down tricycle are spinning.
The swings are empty but swinging.
And the shadow is still there, and there
is the object that made it,
riding the proximate atmosphere,
oblong and illustrious above
the dispeopled bedroom community,
venting the memories of those it took,
their corrosive human element.
This is what you have to walk through to escape,
transparent but alive as coal dust.
This is what you have to hack through,
bamboo-tough and thickly clustered.
The myths are somewhere else, but here are the meanings,
and you have to breathe them in
until they burn your throat
and peck at your brain with their intoxicated teeth.
This is you as seen by them, from the corner of an eye
(was that the way you were always seen?).
This is you when the President died
(the day is brilliant and cold).
This is you poking a ground wasps' nest.
This is you at the doorway, unobserved,
while your aunts and uncles keen over the body.
This is your first river, your first planetarium, your first popsicle.
The cold and brilliant day in six-color prints—
but the people on the screen are black and white.
Your friend's mother is saying,
Hush, children! Don't you understand history is being made?
You do, and you still do. Made and made again.
This is you as seen by them, and them as seen by you,
and you as seen by you, in five dimensions,
in seven, in three again, then two,
then reduced to a dimensionless point
in a universe where the only constant is the speed of light.
This is you at the speed of light.

—*Vijay Seshadri*



United States Constitution

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Bleſsings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

DON'T LET THE CONSTITUTION BE REWRITTEN BY TERRORISM.

The acts of terrorism that struck our country on September 11th were intended not only to destroy, but also to intimidate, forcing us, as a nation, to take actions that are not in our best interest. If we allow these attacks to alter our basic freedoms, then the enemy will have won. Please support the ACLU as we maintain our commitment to a free and safe society. Go to www.aclu.org/safeandfree

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